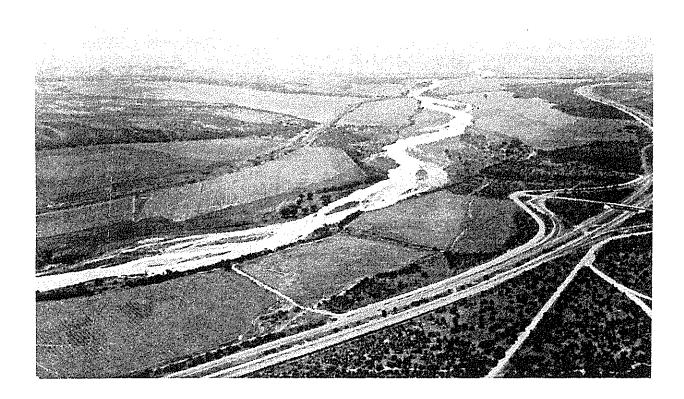
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HAZARD INFORMATION

SANTA CRUZ RIVER

VICINITY OF SONOITA CREEK CONFLUENCE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ARIZONA



PREPARED FOR SANTA CRUZ GOUNTY BY

CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA NOVEMBER 1969

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COVER PHOTO

Aerial view of the Santa Cruz River near its confluence with Sonoita Creek. View is taken looking upstream. (Courtesy of Gulf American Corporation)

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INTRODUCTION

This report relates to the potential flood hazards along a 12.0-mile reach of the Santa Cruz River in Santa Cruz County, Arizona. It was prepared at the request of the county to aid them in planning the best use of the land subject to overflow.

The nature and effect of two probable future floods, namely, the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods, are considered in this report. An Intermediate Regional Flood is a flood that has an average frequency of occurrence of once in 100 years, although this flood may occur in any year. A Standard Project Flood is a flood that may be expected from the most severe combination of meteorological and hydrological conditions that are considered reasonably characteristic of the geographical area in which the drainage basin is located, excluding extremely rare combinations.

The report, which is based on the topographic conditions existing as of December 1968, contains maps, profiles, and cross sections, which indicate the extent and depth of flooding that might occur in the future along the study reach of the Santa Cruz River. With this information and through "flood plain management," the county can guide development of the flood plain. This approach involves the application of control through planned development and management over the use of lands susceptible to floods. This prevention of local flood damage would be an essential part of the community planning and development. It means giving consideration to zoning and subdivision regulations, land acquisition for parks and open spaces, special planning of streets and utilities, and appropriate construction standards for buildings in flood hazard areas, as well as to levees, dams, and other protective works.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM AREA

The reach of the Santa Cruz River studied extends from river mile 169.0 near the Tumacacori National Monument to river mile 181.0 upstream from Sonoita Creek confluence (see pl. 1). The river flows generally northward in the reach considered. U.S. Highway 89 parallels the river on the west side and the Southern Pacific railroad parallels it on the east side. The river flows through a relatively narrow valley, part of which is used for agriculture and part for cattle grazing.

Most of the land adjoining the river is within the Gulf American Corporation of Arizona Rio Rico project area, which consists of about 55,000 acres that are being subdivided for residential type developments. As the area is developed, it can be expected that it will become highly urbanized.

The drainage area of the Santa Cruz River above the downstream limit of this study is 1,170 square miles, part of which is in Mexico. Major tributary streams within the study reach are Sonoita Creek, Potrero Creek, Josephine Canyon, Peck Canyon, and Agua Fria Canyon.

Existing flood control facilities

There are no existing flood control facilities in the study reach of the Santa Cruz River, nor are there county or Federal flood control projects authorized or proposed in the study area. Local interests have constructed post and wire fences along intermittent reaches of the river for the protection of the river banks; otherwise, the river has remained in its natural state. There is a dam forming a lake for recreational purposes on Sonoita Creek, located about 5 miles upstream from its confluence with the Santa Cruz River. It is assumed that the reservoir would be full to spillway crest during the occurrence of the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods in Sonoita Creek; therefore, the dam would have no effect in

reducing the magnitude of floods flowing into the Santa Cruz River from Sonoita Creek.

A survey for flood control and allied purposes of the Santa Cruz River Basin is presently being conducted by the Corps of Engineers concurrently with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau will consider multipurpose dams on the Santa Cruz River. In addition to multipurpose dams, the Corps will consider detention dams, check dams, and channel improvements on the Santa Cruz River and its tributaries.

Bridges across the stream

One local road bridge (mile 176.36) and one railroad bridge (mile 177.89) cross the Santa Cruz River in the reach studied. The local road bridge (fig. 1), which is the Rio Rico Drive bridge, is a four-span concrete bridge, having a total length of about 265 feet. The approaches to the bridge are at lower elevations than the floor elevation of the bridge.

The railroad bridge (fig. 2), which is located at the confluence of Sonoita Creek with the Santa Cruz River, is a 14-span wooden bridge, having a total length of about 280 feet. The railroad diverges from along the river toward Nogales at this point. The bridge and its piers are on a skew; and consequently, they would be an obstruction to floodflows in the river. The probability exists that sections of the bridge would be washed out during the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods in the Santa Cruz River.

Rainfall and past floods

Three types of storms (general winter storms, general summer storms, and local thunderstorms) produce precipitation in the Santa Cruz River drainage area. General winter storms are usually of North Pacific Ocean origin, moving inland to southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Precipitation during general winter storms

BRIDGES ACROSS THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER

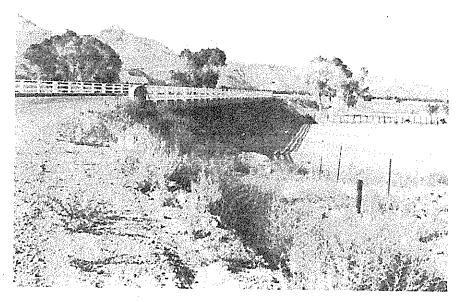


Figure 1.--Upstream side of Rio Rico Drive bridge at mile 176.36, downstream from the railroad bridge in figure 2.



Figure 2.--Upstream side of Southern Pacific railroad bridge at mile 177.89, at the confluence of the Santa Cruz River with Sonoita Creek.

(R) may be continuous for several days. General summer storms usually result from an influx of tropical maritime air originating over the Gulf of Mexico or over the South Pacific. Such storms occur generally between the months of July and September, causing heavy rainfall over large areas for periods up to 24 hours.

General summer storms and floods of very high magnitude have occurred in hydrologically similar basins. These resulted from the chance centering of summer storms over nearby drainage areas, such as the following: San Pedro River at Charleston (1,220 sq. miles), a peak discharge of 98,000 cubic feet per second on September 28, 1926; and on Santa Rosa Wash at Vaiva Vo (1,780 sq. miles), a peak of 53,000 cubic feet per second on September 27, 1962. Such high magnitude peaks are entirely possible in the Santa Cruz River Basin if a similar type summer storm should center over the drainage area.

Local thunderstorms, which are frequent summer phenomena, may occur separately or in conjunction with general storms. Such storms cover comparatively small areas and result in high-intensity rainfall of short duration, usually 3 hours or less.

Records of stream-gaging stations on the Santa Cruz River indicate that large floods occurred in 1914, 1935, 1946, 1950, 1955, 1962, 1964, and 1967. Data from four active gaging stations are available from which it is possible to develop a history of past floods in the study reach of the river and to predict the magnitude and frequency of future floods. These stations are as follows:

Santa Cruz River near Lochiel · Santa Cruz River near Nogales Sonoita Creek near Patagonia Santa Cruz River at Continental

In addition, records are available for Nogales Wash from a stream-gaging station that existed during the period between April 1932 and February 1934. The highest recorded peak discharges for these stations are shown in table 1.

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Table 1
PAST FLOODS

	Highest recorded				
Station	<u>Date</u>	peak discharge cfs	Drainage area sq. mi.		
Santa Cruz, Lochiel (1949-date)	9-12-65	4,810	82		
Santa Cruz, Nogales (1907-date)	12-20-67	15,200	533		
Sonoita, Patagonia (1930-33, 1935-date)	9-30-46	14,000	210		
Santa Cruz, Continental (1940-46, 1951-date)	12-20-67	18,000	1,662		
Nogales Wash, Nogales (1932-34)	8-26-32	3,250	37·		

A flood damage investigation made by the Corps of Engineers of the 1962 storm and flood in the Santa Cruz River indicated that extensive bank erosion and flooding of low lying pasture and cropland resulted. Total damage along the Santa Cruz River in Santa Cruz County was estimated to be \$95,000 (1962 price levels). Extremely high runoff from local tributaries, such as Sonoita Creek and Josephine Canyon, flooded the entire width of the valley floor. This flood had a recorded peak discharge of about 2,020 cubic feet per second at the stream-gaging station at Nogales and a peak discharge of about 2,480 cubic feet per second at the stream-gaging station at Continental.

Aerial photographs of the December 1967 flood in the Santa Cruz River indicate that an extensive area of the valley floor was inundated and a section of U.S. Highway 89 was damaged by erosion of its embankment. This flood had a peak discharge of about 15,200 cubic feet per second at the stream-gaging station at Nogales and a recorded peak discharge of 18,000 cubic feet per second at the stream-gaging station at Continental. Figures 3 and 4 show the damage and the area inundated by this flood in the Santa Cruz River in the reach studied.

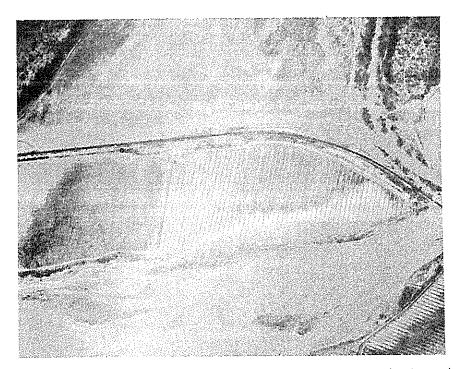


Figure 3.--Aerial view of the Santa Cruz River during the 1967 flood. The area shown is just downstream from the Southern Pacific railroad bridge.

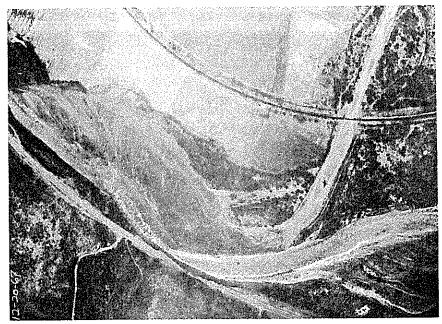


Figure 4.--Aerial view of the Santa Cruz River at the confluence with Josephine Canyon during the 1967 flood. Photo shows the damage to U.S. Highway 89.

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PROBLEMS OF FUTURE FLOODS

Floods of appreciable magnitudes have been experienced in the past on the Santa Cruz River and on its tributaries; and the probability exists that larger floods of the magnitudes considered here, namely, the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods, would occur in this river. Floods the size of the Intermediate Regional Flood represent floods that may reasonably be expected to occur more frequently, although they will not be as large as the infrequent Standard Project Flood. Floods the size of the Standard Project Flood represent reasonably upper limits of expected flooding. Peak discharges of the Intermediate Regional Flood and of the Standard Project Flood are shown on table 2, on the following page, for several points along the Santa Cruz River, and one point each on Sonoita Creek and on Josephine Canyon, tributaries to the Santa Cruz River.

Table 2
PEAK DISCHARGES

Stream and location	River mile	Drainage area	Intermediate Regional Flood <u>discharge</u> cfs	Standard Project Flood discharge cfs
Santa Cruz River Downstream limit of study	169.00	1,170	56,000	88,000
Downstream from confluence with Josephine Canyon	169.88	1,120	55,000	85,000
Rio Rico Drive bridge	176.36	974	54,000	80,000
Upstream from confluence with Sonoita Creek	178.00	722	51,000	68,000
Upstream limit of study	181.00	610	48,000	65,000
Sonoita Creek Confluence with Santa Cruz River	0.00	264	*28,000	*70,000
Josephine Canyon Confluence with Santa Cruz River	0.00	51	*13,500	*43,000

 $[\]star Based$ on assumed occurrence of a local thunderstorm.

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Areas flooded and heights of flooding

Plate 2 is an index map of plates 3 through 14, which show the areas along the Santa Cruz River that would be flooded by the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods. The actual limits of these overflow areas on the ground may vary somewhat from those shown on the map because the small scale of the map does not permit precise plotting of the flooded area boundaries. Depths of flow in the Santa Cruz River can be estimated from the high water profiles that are shown on plates 15 through 18 and from the cross sections that are shown on plates 19 and 20. As shown, the Standard Project Flood profile is generally about 2 feet higher than that of the Intermediate Regional Flood. The water surface profile computations were based on the topographic maps dated December 1968, which were provided by the Cella and Barr Engineering Company of Tucson, Arizona, and supplemented with information obtained during field investigations of the stream.

Structures affecting the flow

The railroad bridge and the local road bridge, which cross the river in the study reach, would significantly affect the flow in the river. These two bridges would not have openings that would be adequate to pass the Intermediate Regional Flood or the Standard Project Flood, if these two floods were contained within the channel section of the river and were made to flow through the bridges.

In addition to the two bridges, the railroad embankment, which is in the flood plain of the Santa Cruz River, would significantly affect the flow in the river. In reaches where the railroad embankment would be above the flood stage of the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods in the river, the flow on the east (opposite) side of the railroad embankment would be at a lower stage than the flood stage on the river side of the embankment. In reaches where the railroad embankment would be inundated, the flood stage on both sides of the embankment would be about the same. The cross sections,

plates 19 and 20, show the effects of the railroad embankment, as described above. There are culverts and bridges through the railroad embankment at intermittent points along the railroad; however, they would have little or no effect on the flow during the occurrence of the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods in the Santa Cruz River.

Velocity of water

The velocity of water in the channel of the Santa Cruz River in the study reach for the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods would generally range from 5 to 11 feet per second. These velocities would cause a significant amount of bank cutting and scour to the riverbed. The velocity of water on the flood plain outside the channel would generally range from 3 to 6 feet per second. These velocities would cause the deposition of silt and debris on the overbank areas along the river.

Table 3 lists the velocity of water that would occur in the channel and on the overbank areas at selected points along the river during the Intermediate Regional and Standard Project Floods. They are indicative of the type of velocities that would occur in the study reach of the Santa Cruz River.

Velocities greater than 3 feet per second, combined with depths of 3 feet or greater, are considered hazardous to life and property.

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Table 3

VELOCITY OF WATER

		Intermediate Regional Flood velocity		Standard Project Flood velocity	
Stream	Location mile		<u>Overbank</u> fps	Channel fps	Overbank fps
Santa Cruz River Near downstream of study	169.3	7	3	9	4
Upstream from Otero	172.2	5	3	5	3
One mile downstream from Rio Rico Driv		8	3	9	4
Near confluence with Sonoita Creek	n 177.3	7	4	8	4
Upstream from confluence with Potrero Creek	179.0	9	5	11	. 6
Upstream limit of study	181.0	7	5	7	5

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Flood. An overflow of lands not normally covered by water and that are used or usable by man. Floods have two essential characteristics: The inundation of land is temporary; and the land is adjacent to and inundated by overflow from a river or a stream, an ocean, or a lake or other body of standing water.

Normally, a "flood" is considered as any temporary rise in streamflow or stage, but not the ponding of surface water, that results in significant adverse effects in the vicinity. Adverse effects may include damages from overflow of land areas, temporary backwater effects in sewers and local drainage channels, creation of unsanitary conditions or other unfavorable situations by deposition of materials in stream channels during flood recessions, rise of ground water coincident with increased streamflow, and other problems.

Flood Crest. The maximum stage or elevation reached by the waters of a flood at a given location.

Flood Peak. The maximum instantaneous discharge of a flood at a given location. It usually occurs at or near the time of the flood crest.

Flood Plain. The relatively flat area or low lands adjoining the channel of a river, a stream, or a watercourse, an ocean, or a lake or other body of standing water, which has been or may be covered by floodwater.

Flood Profile. A graph showing the relationship of water surface elevation to location, the latter generally expressed as distance above mouth for a stream of water flowing in an open channel. It is generally drawn to show surface elevation for the crest of a specific flood, but may be prepared for conditions at a given time or stage.

Flood Stage. The stage or elevation at which overflow of the natural banks of a stream or body of water begins in the reach or area in which the elevation is measured.

Intermediate Regional Flood. A flood having an average frequency of occurrence in the order of once in 100 years, although the flood may occur in any year. It is based on statistical analyses of streamflow records available for the watershed and analyses of rainfall and runoff characteristics in the "general region of the watershed."

Low Steel (or Soffit). The lowest point of a bridge or other structure over or across a river, stream, or watercourse that limits the opening through which water flows. This is referred to as "low steel" in some regions.

Probable Maximum Flood. The probable maximum flood represents a flood discharge that may be expected from the most severe combination of critical meteorological and hydrological conditions that is reasonably possible in the region. Such floods, as used by the Corps of Engineers, are applicable to projects, such as dams, where consideration is to be given to virtually complete security against potential floods.

Standard Project Flood. The flood that may be expected from the most severe combination of meteorological and hydrological conditions that is considered reasonably characteristic of the geographical area in which the drainage basin is located, excluding extremely rare combinations. Peak discharges for these floods are generally about 40 percent to 60 percent of the Probable Maximum Floods for the same basins. Such floods, as used by the Corps of Engineers, are intended as practicable expressions of the degree of protection that should be sought in the design of flood control works, the failure of which might be disastrous.

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AUTHORITY, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

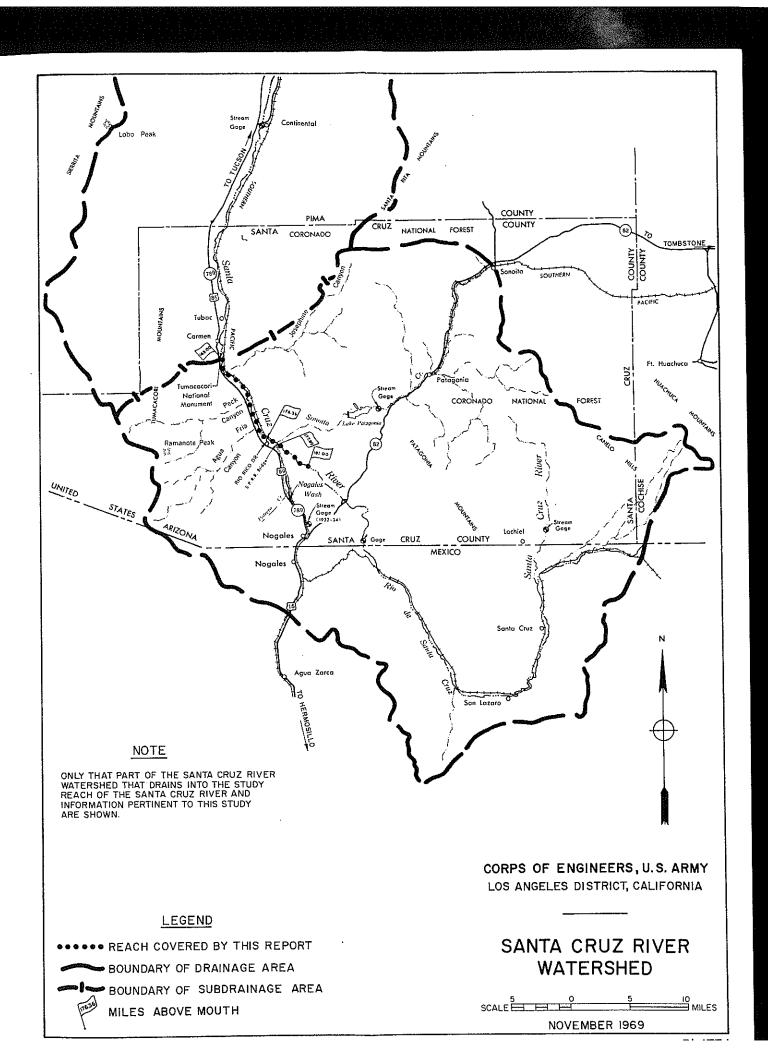
This report has been prepared in accordance with the authority granted by section 206 of the Flood Control Act of 1960 (Public Law 86-645), as amended.

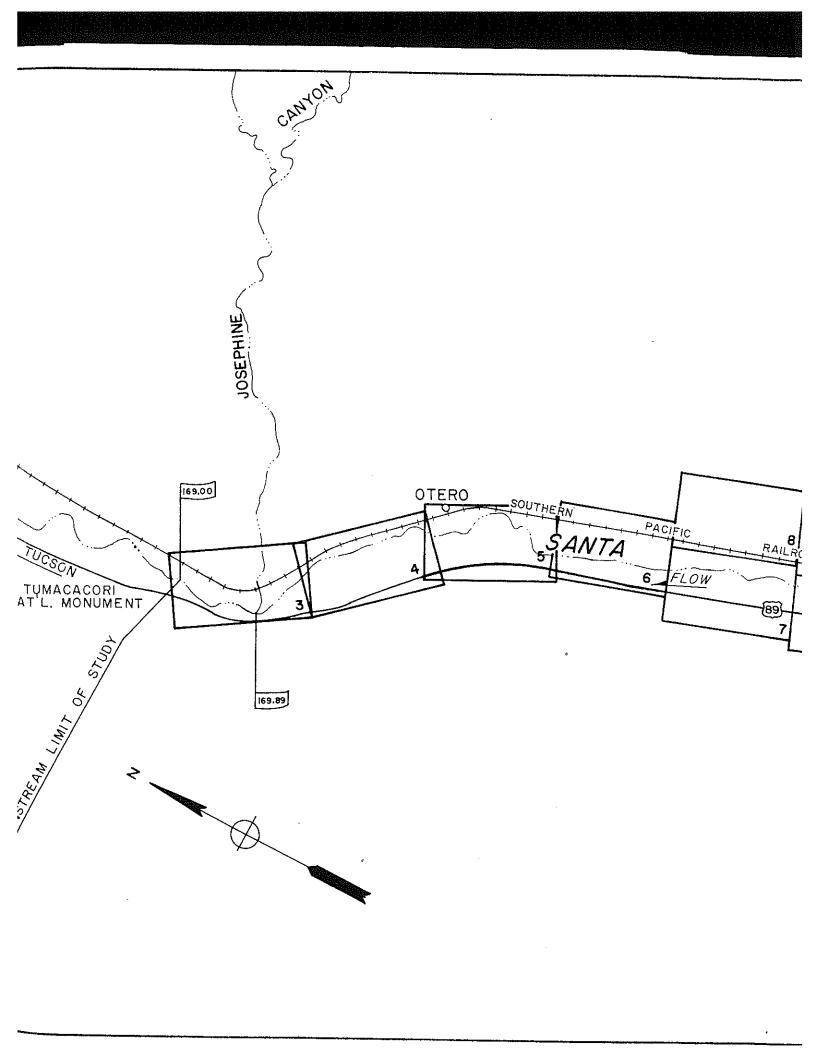
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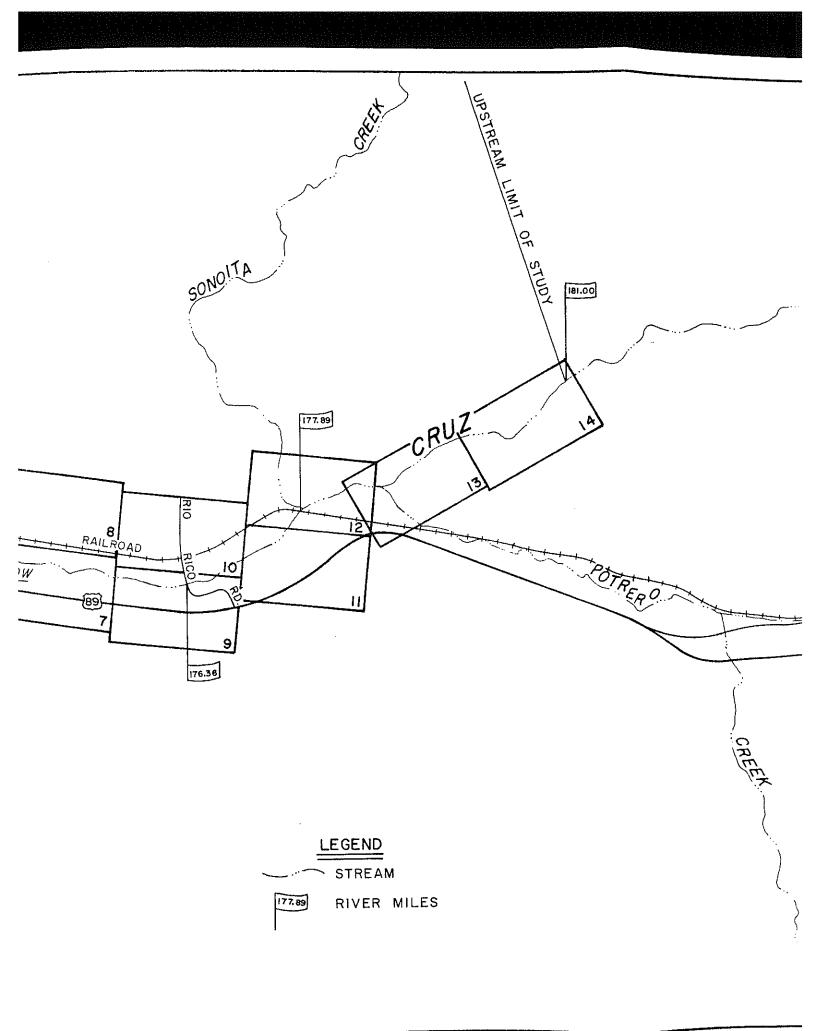
Assistance and cooperation of Santa Cruz County, Cella and Barr Engineering Company, Gulf American Corporation of Arizona, and Southern Pacific railroad in supplying useful data are appreciated.

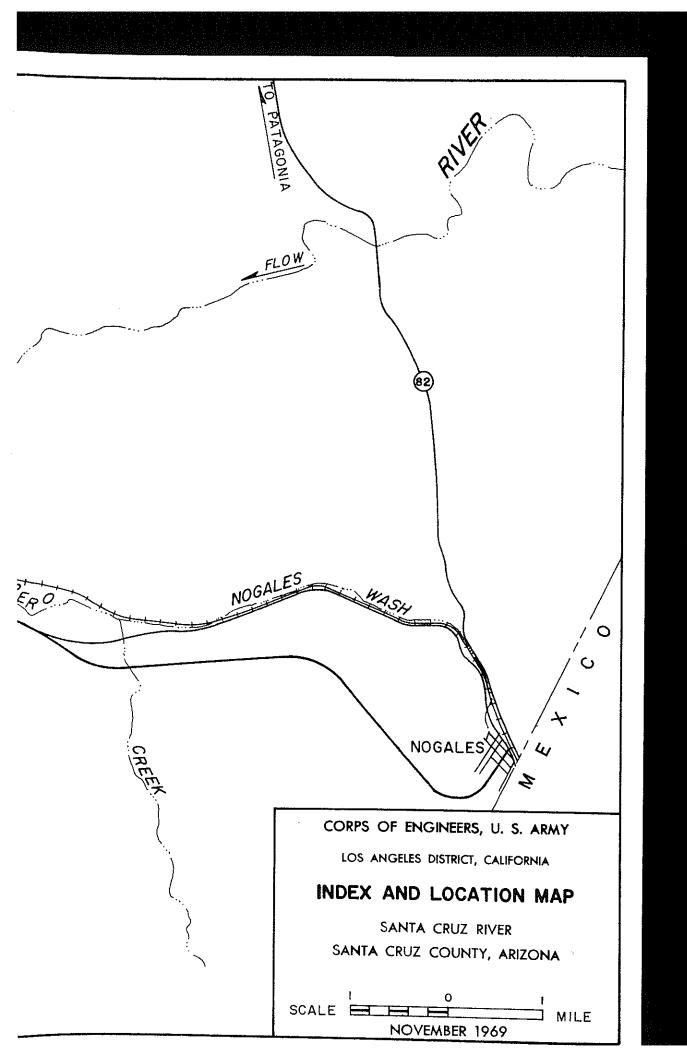
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This report presents the potential flood hazard condition along the Santa Cruz River in Santa Cruz County. The Los Angeles District of the Corps of Engineers will, upon request, provide technical assistance in the interpretation and use of the information contained herein and will provide other available flood data related thereto.

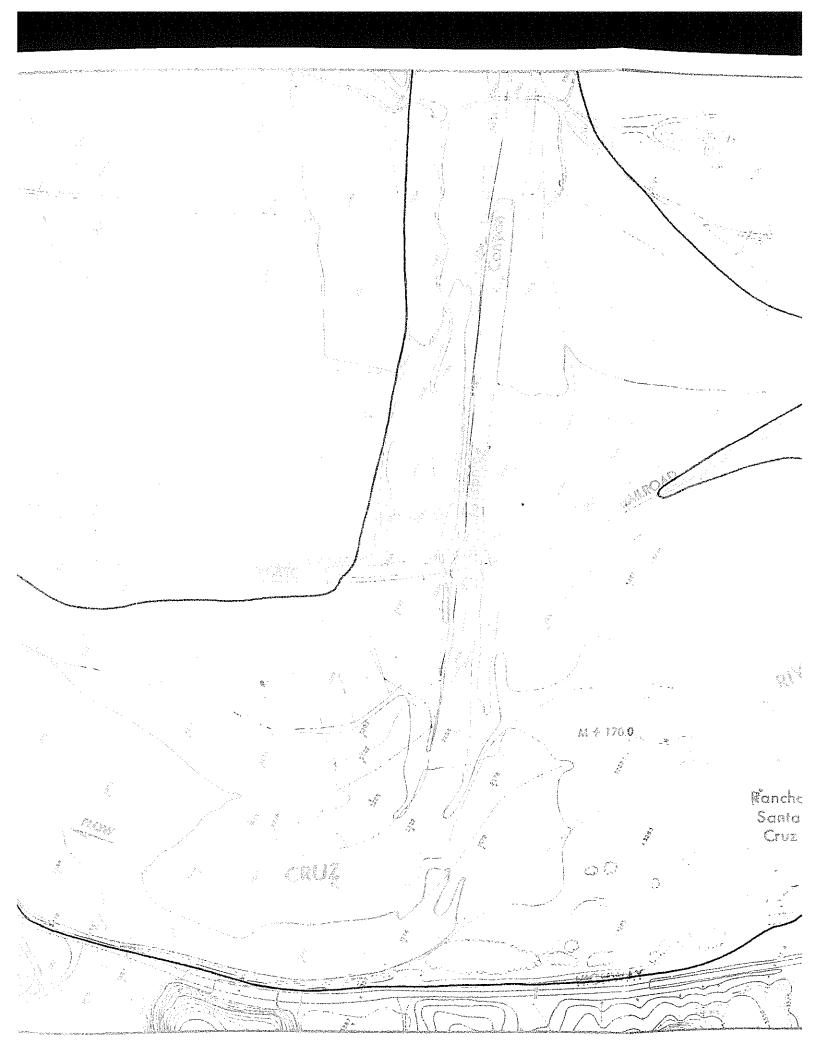


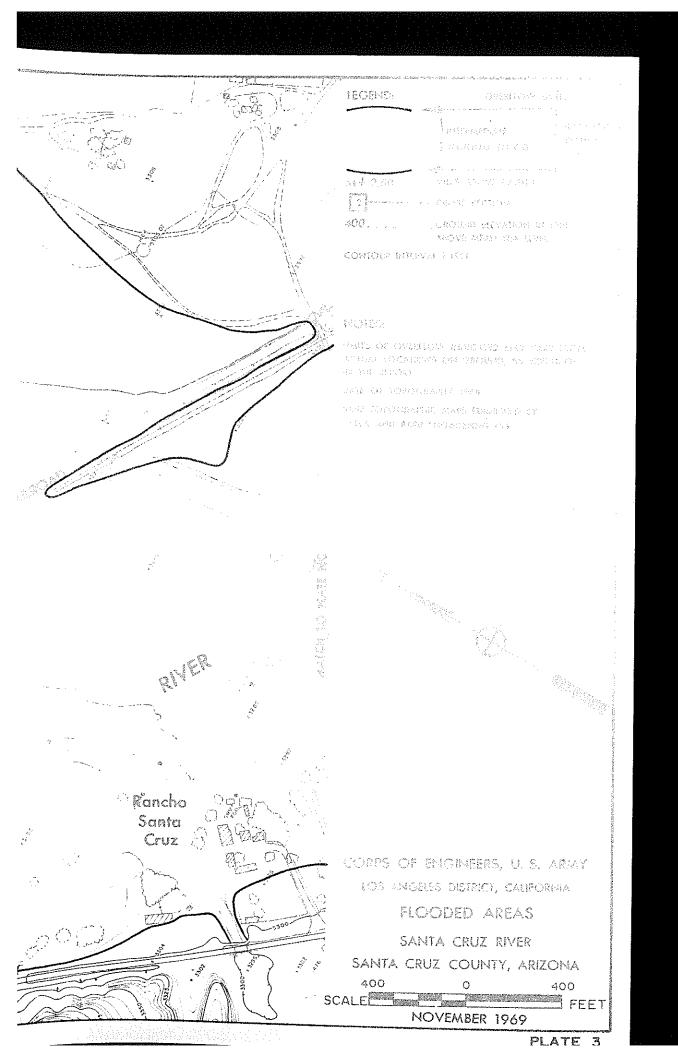




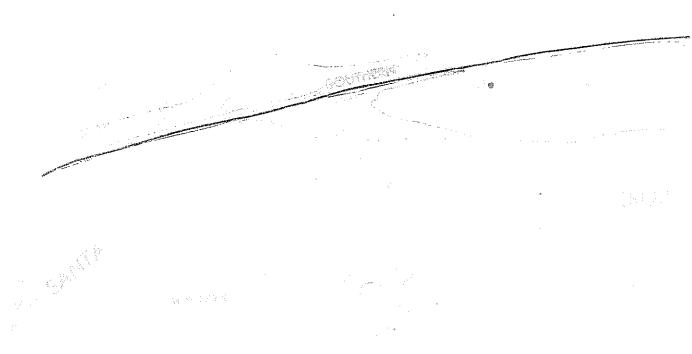




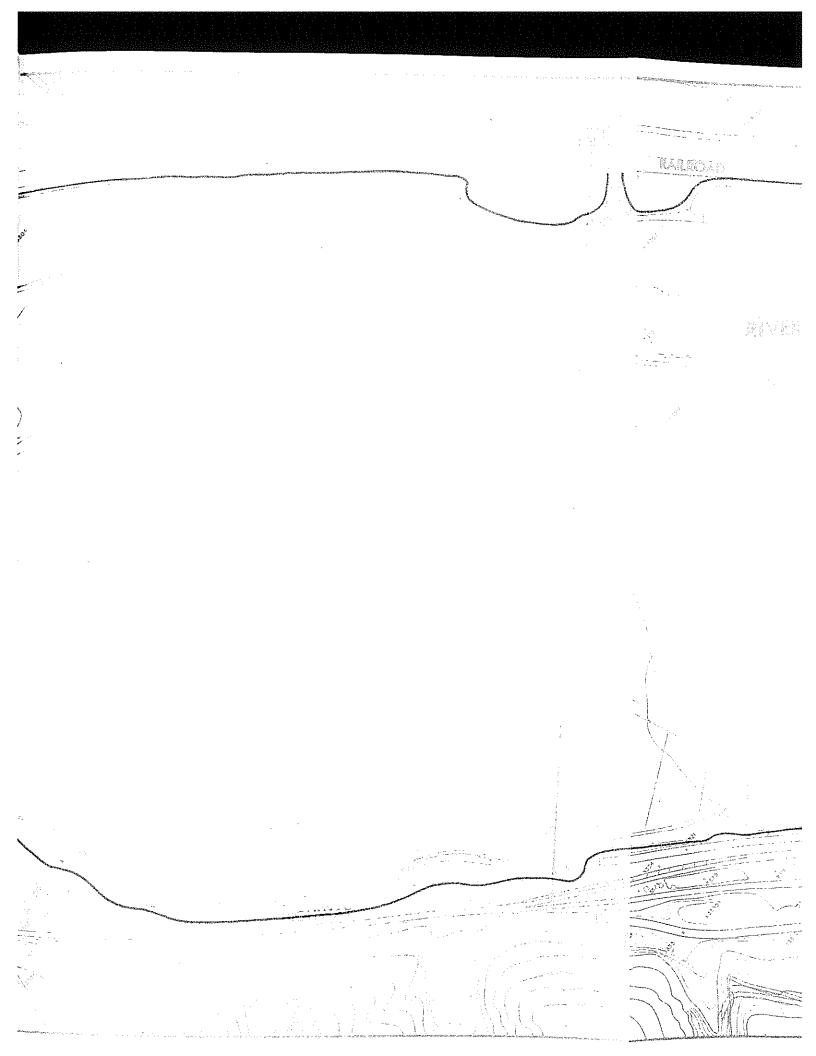


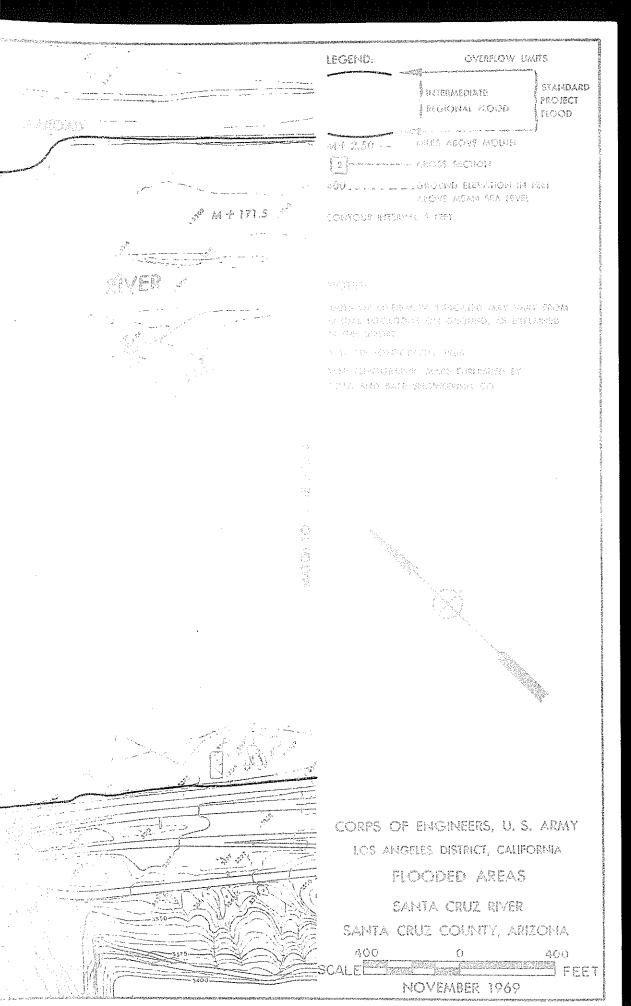


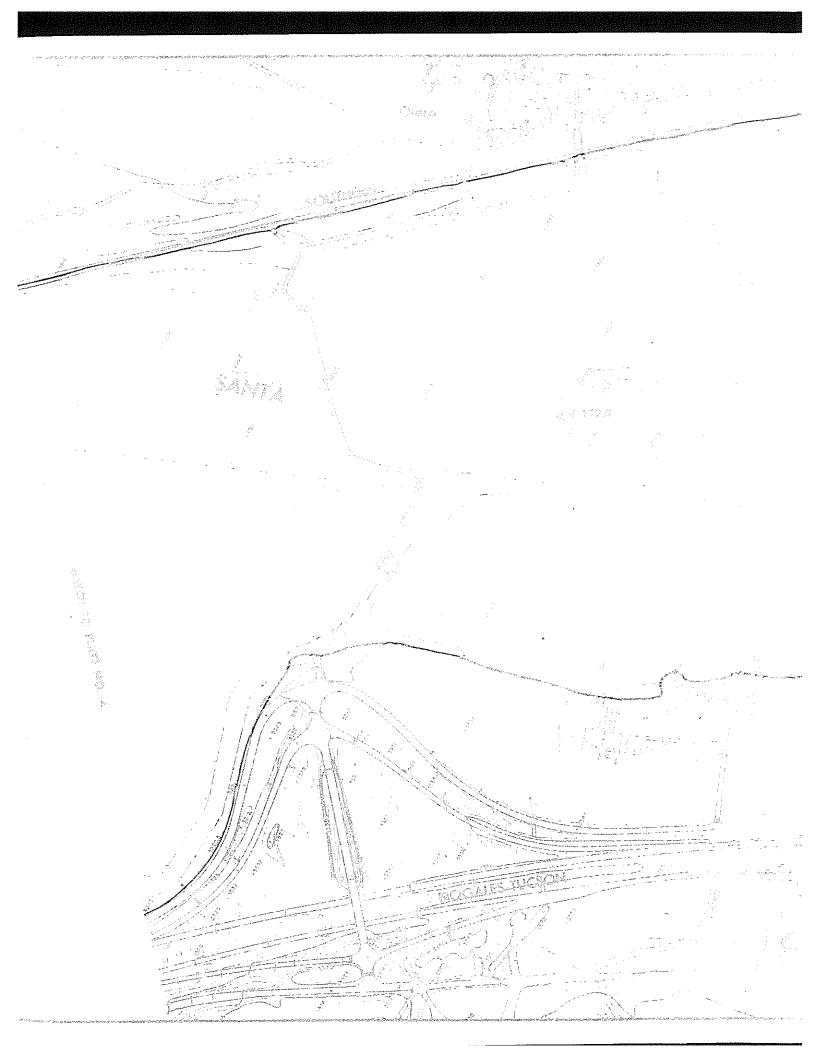
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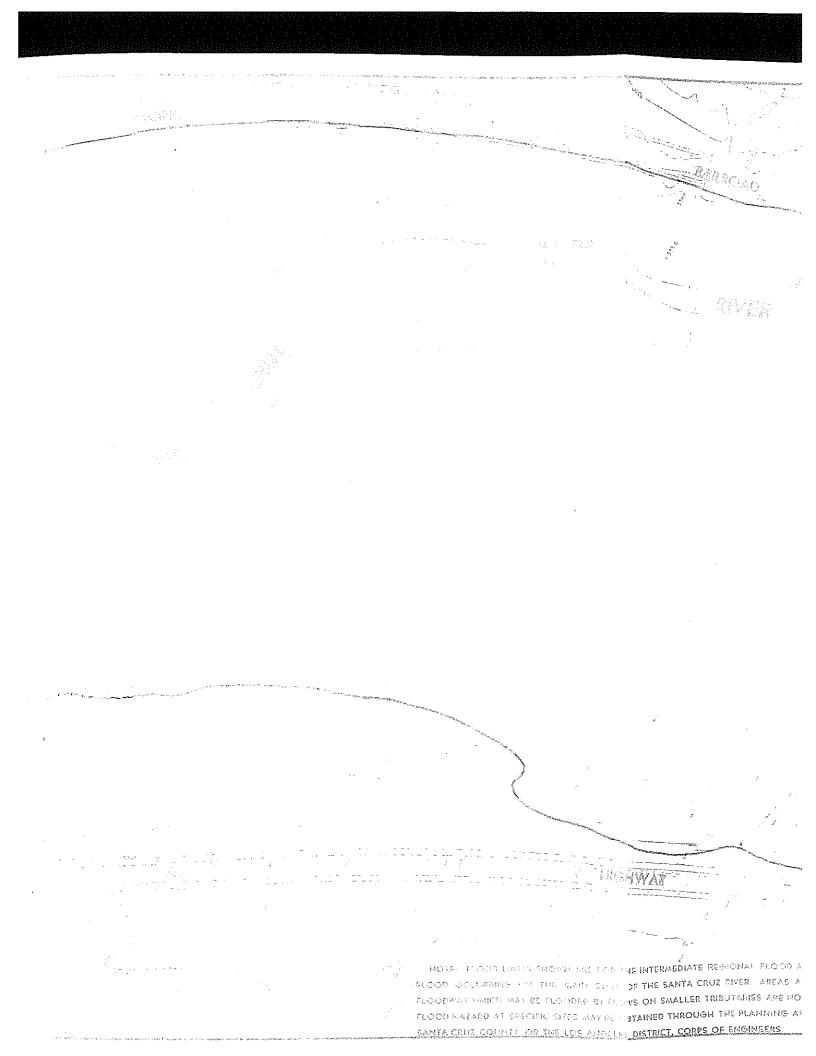


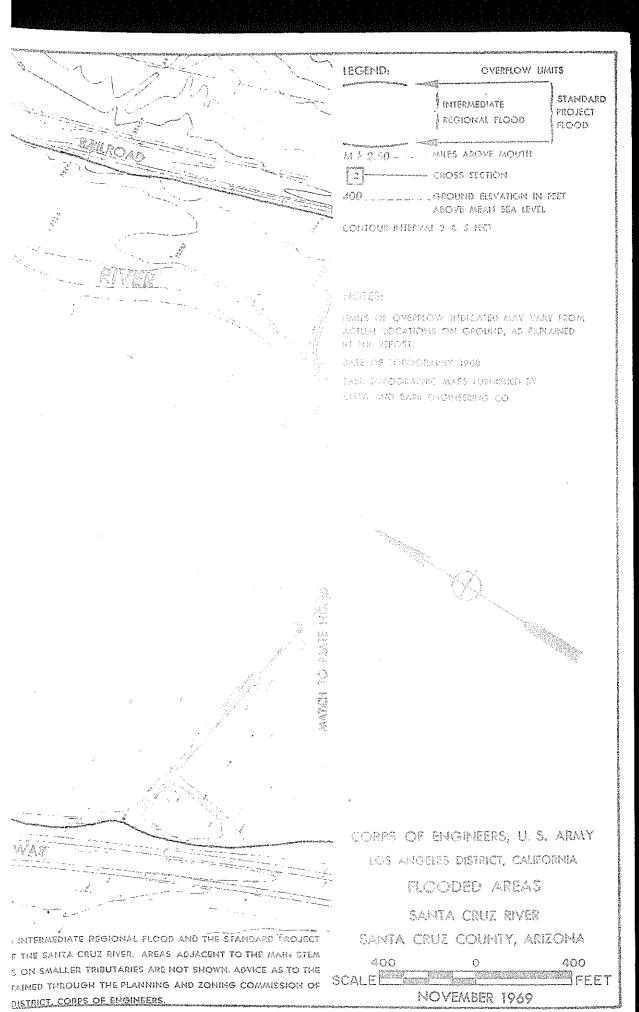
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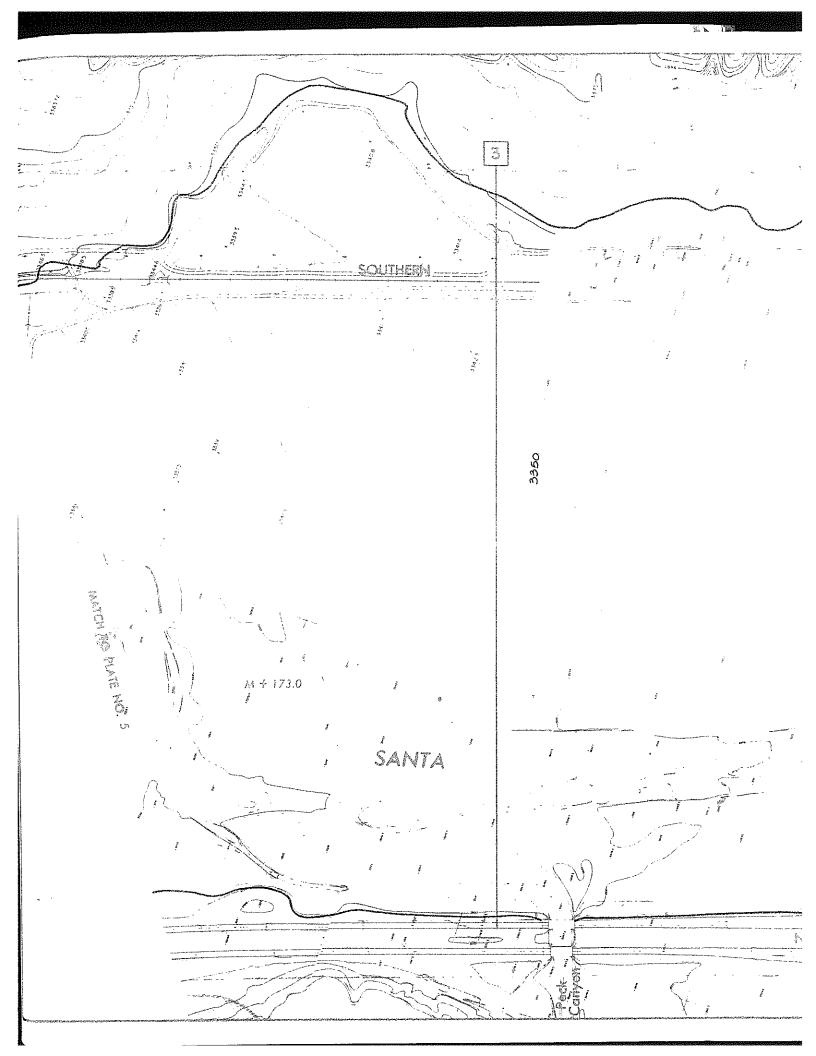


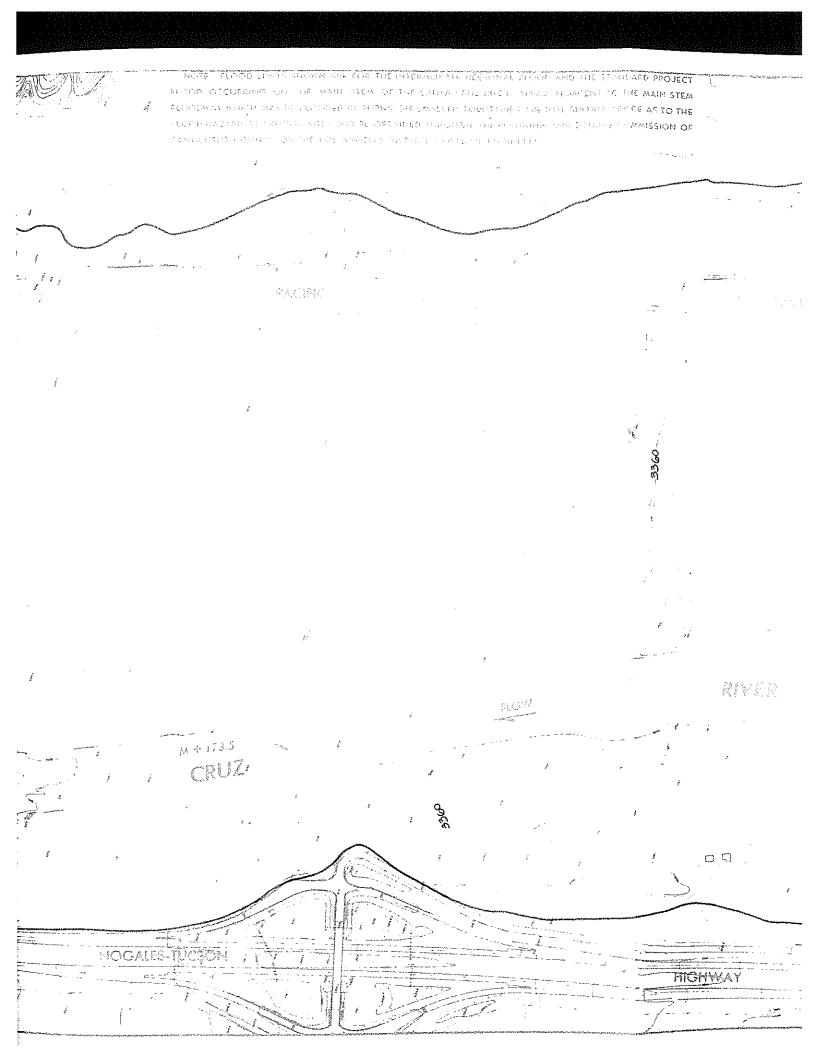


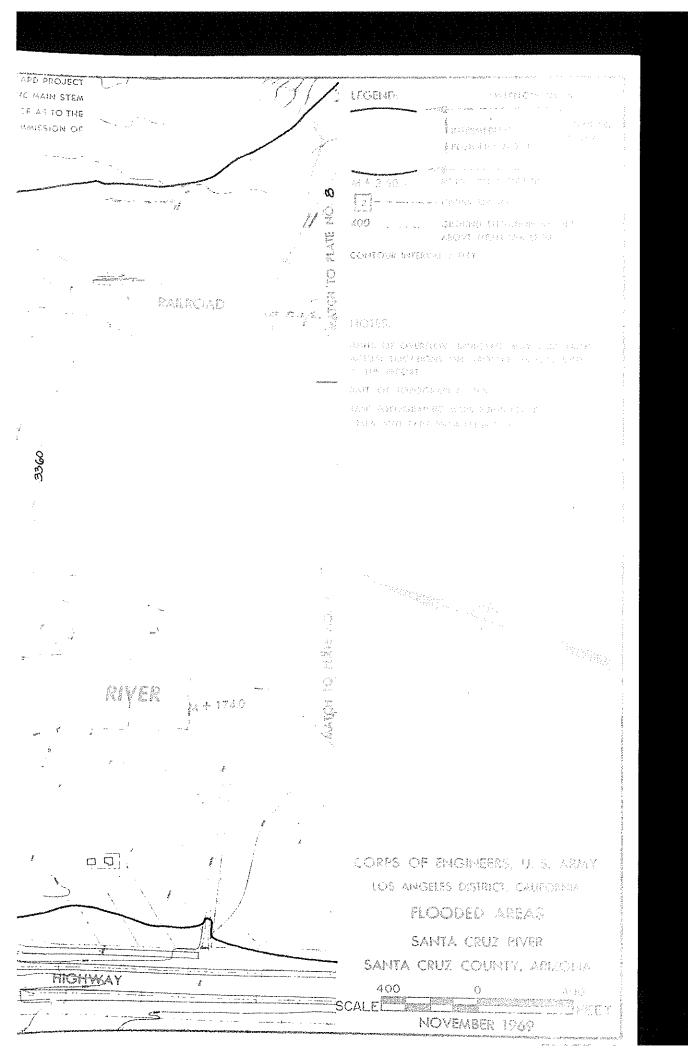


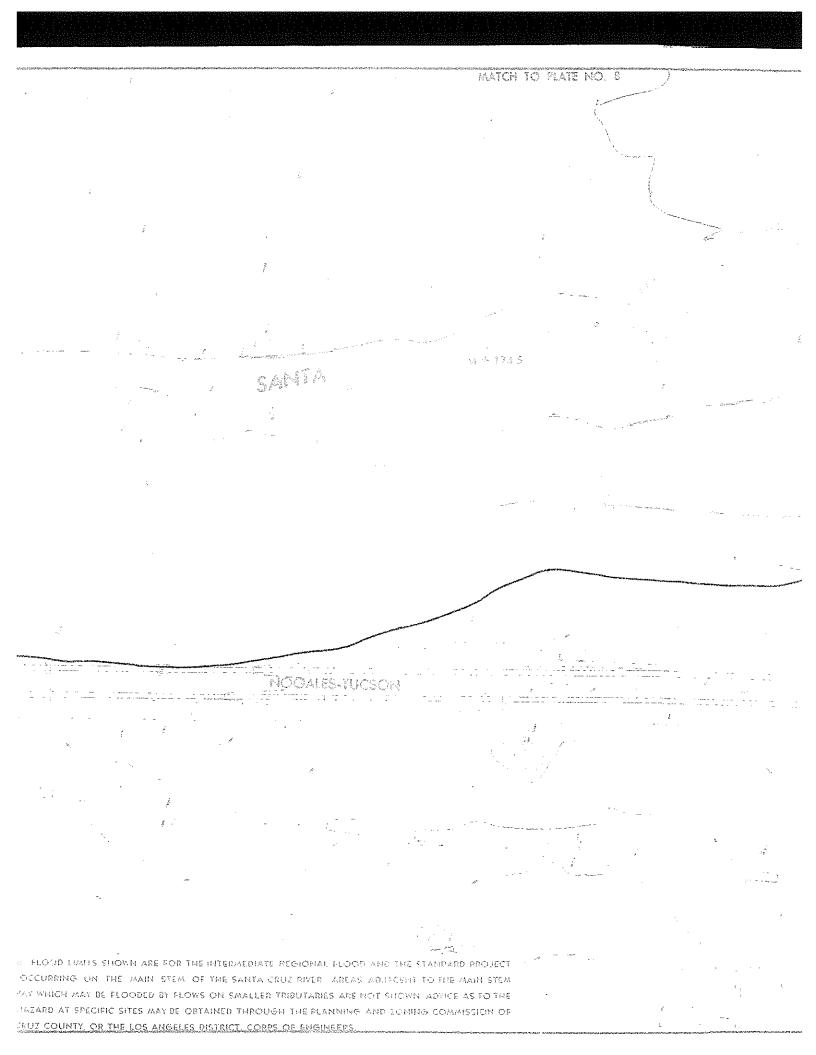






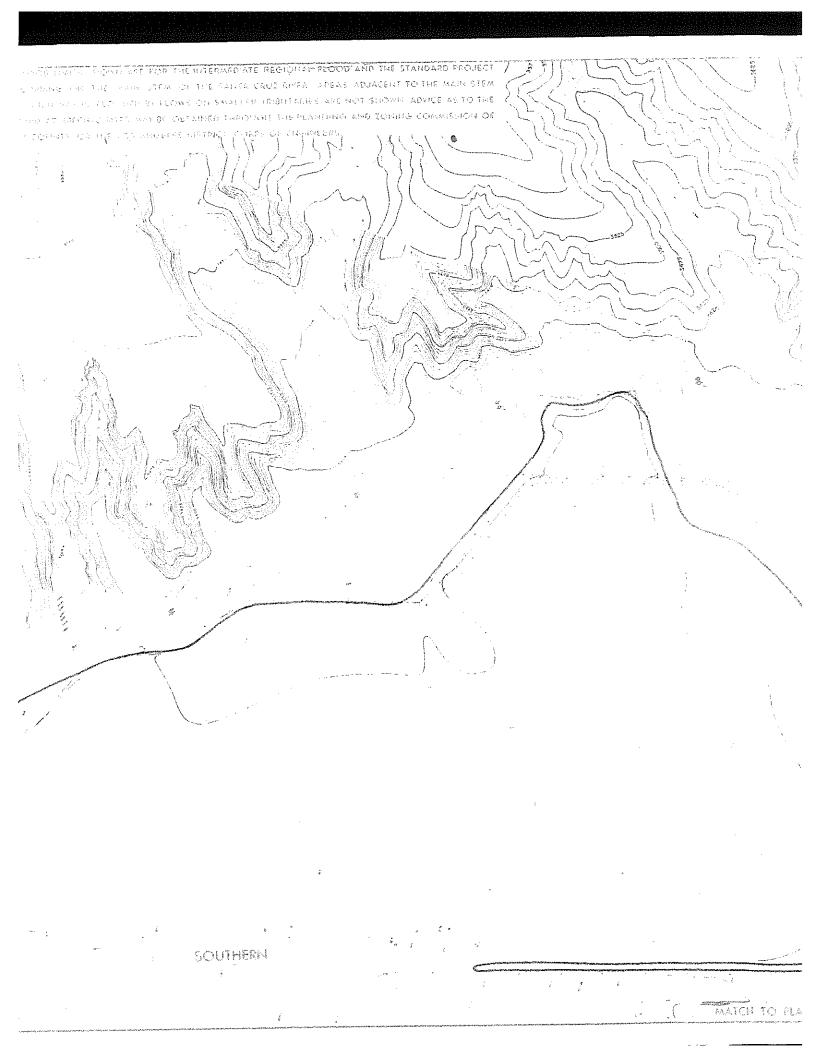




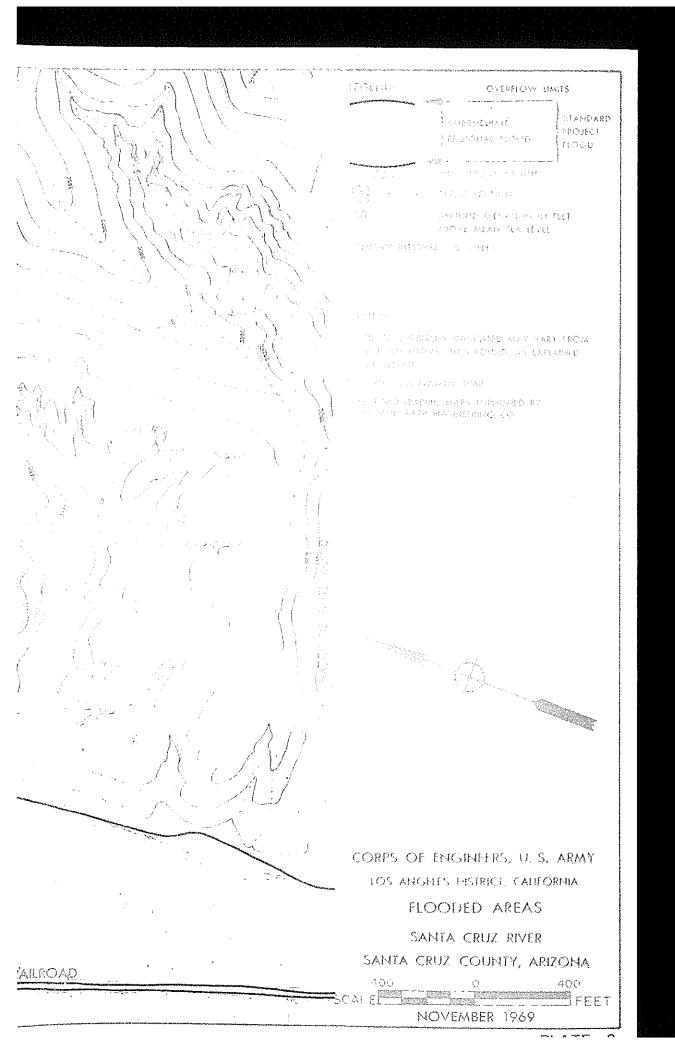


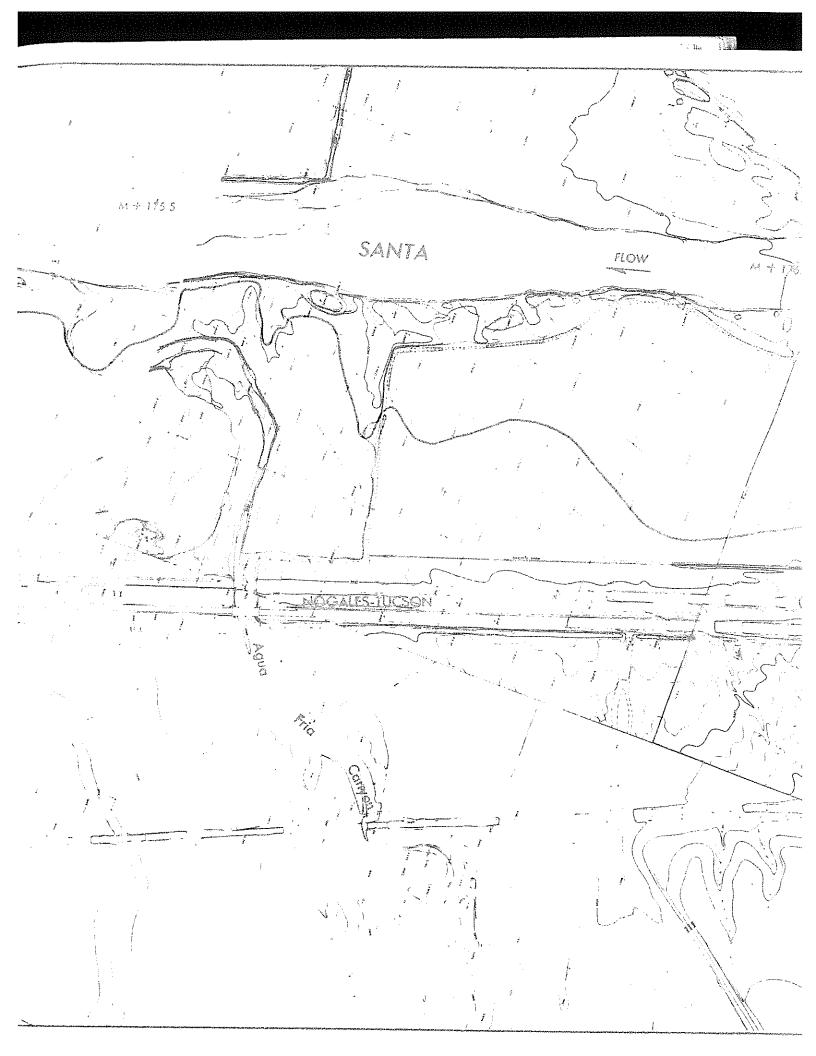
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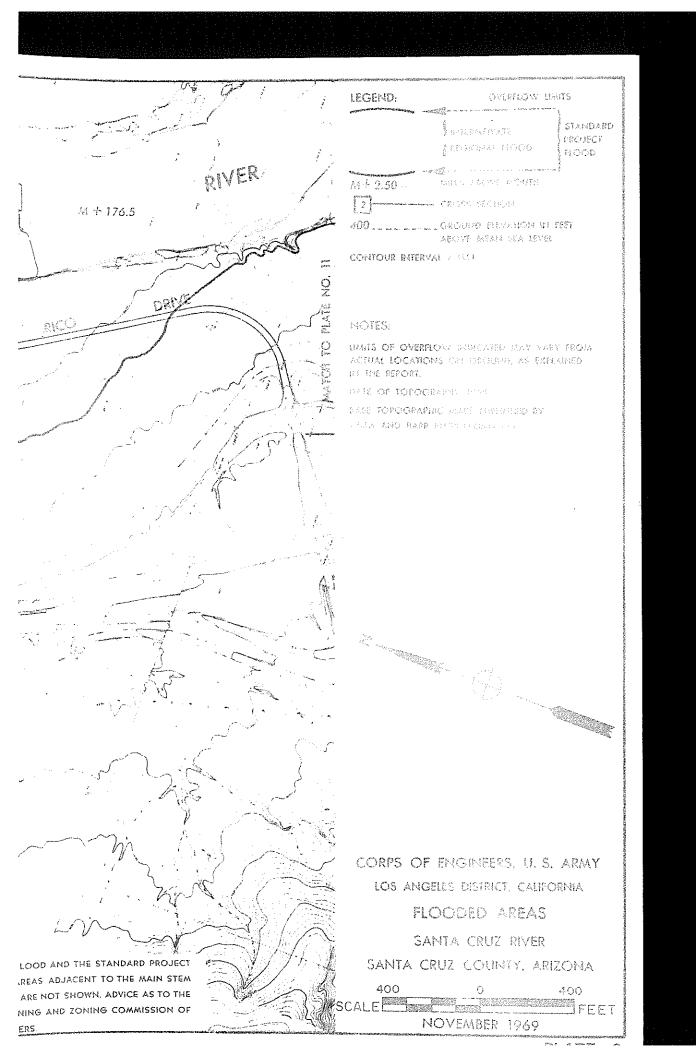






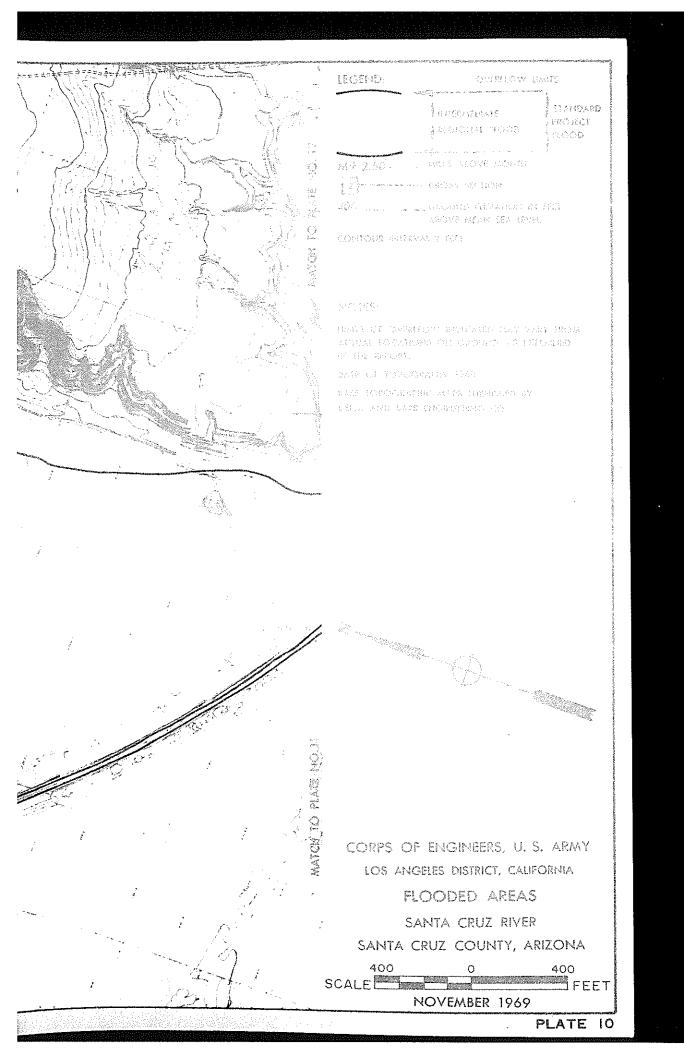


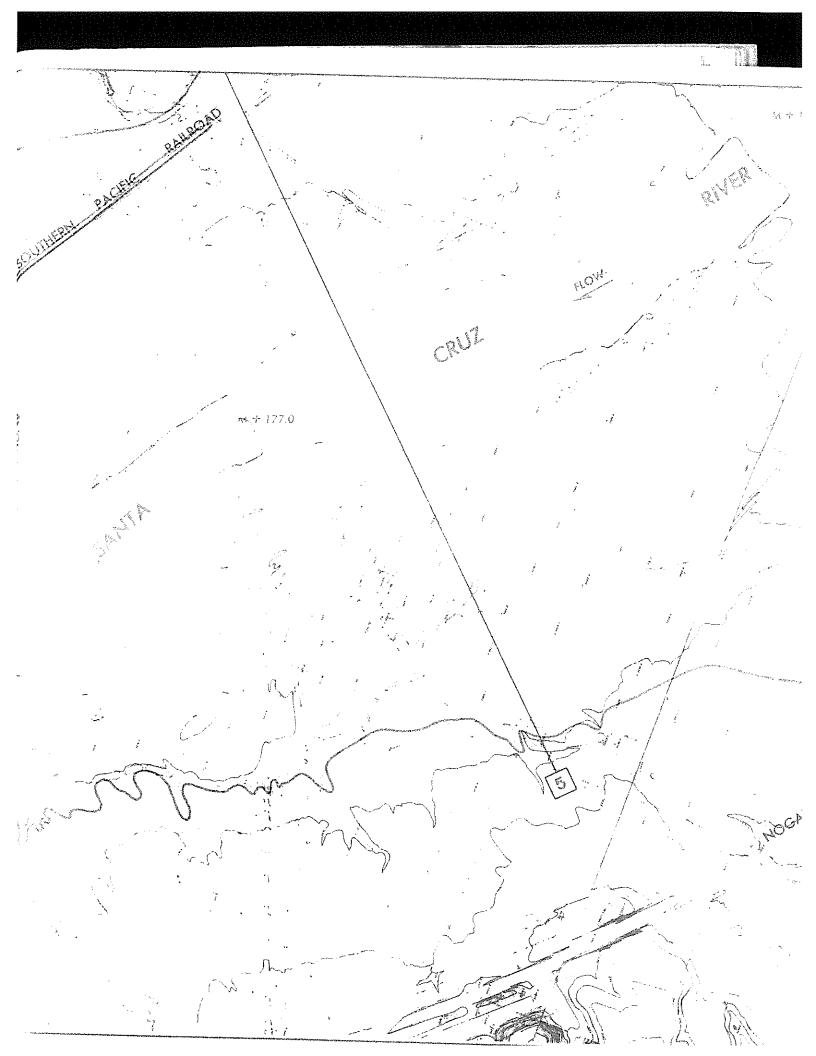




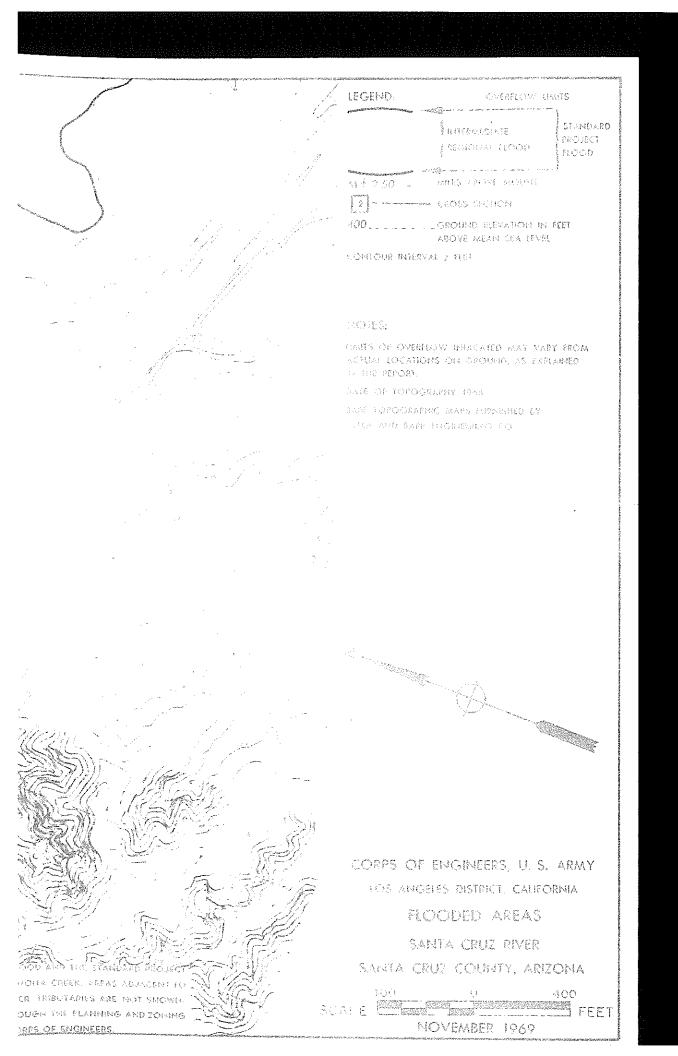


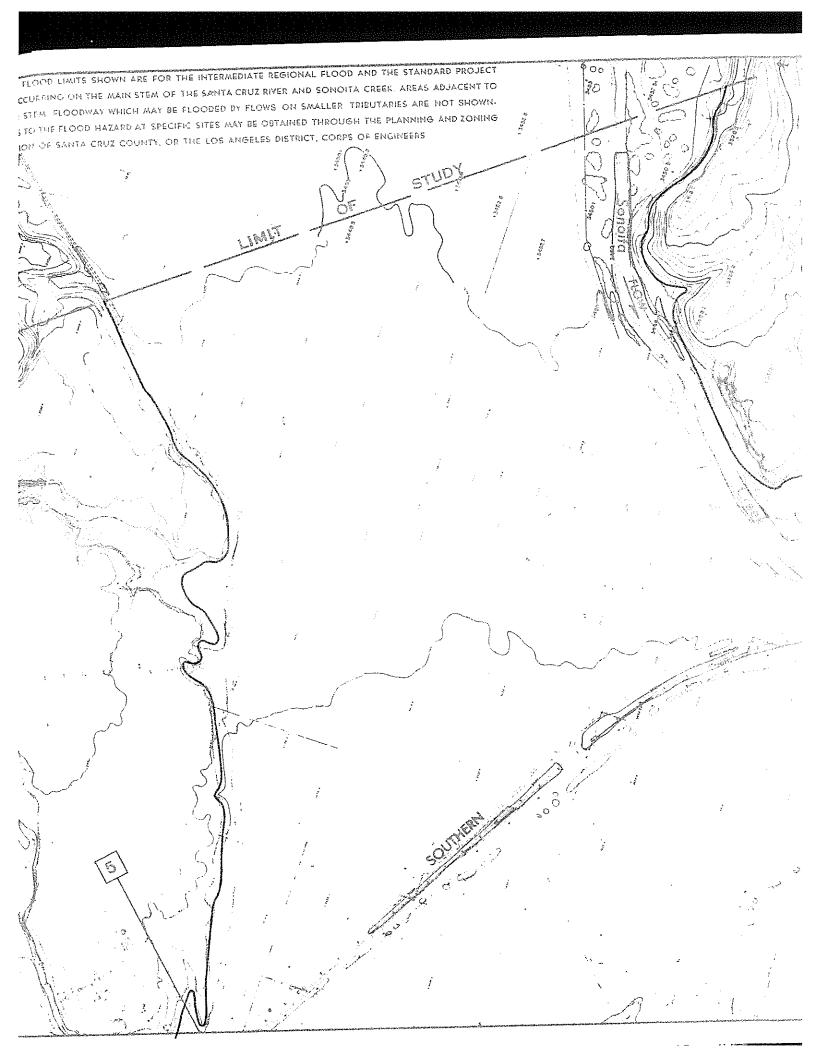




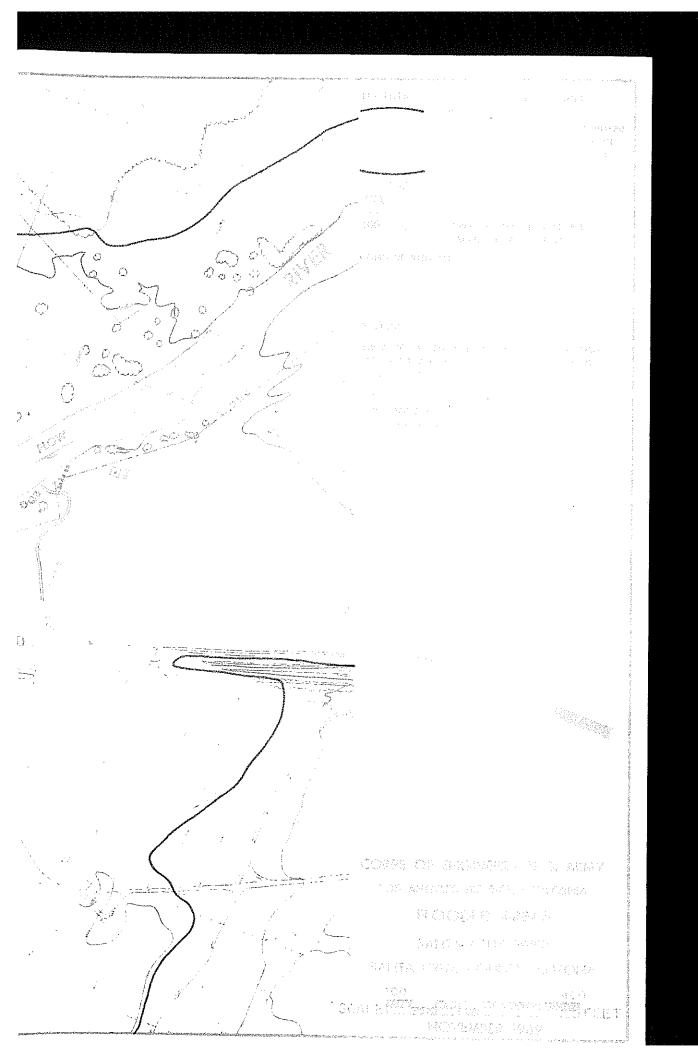


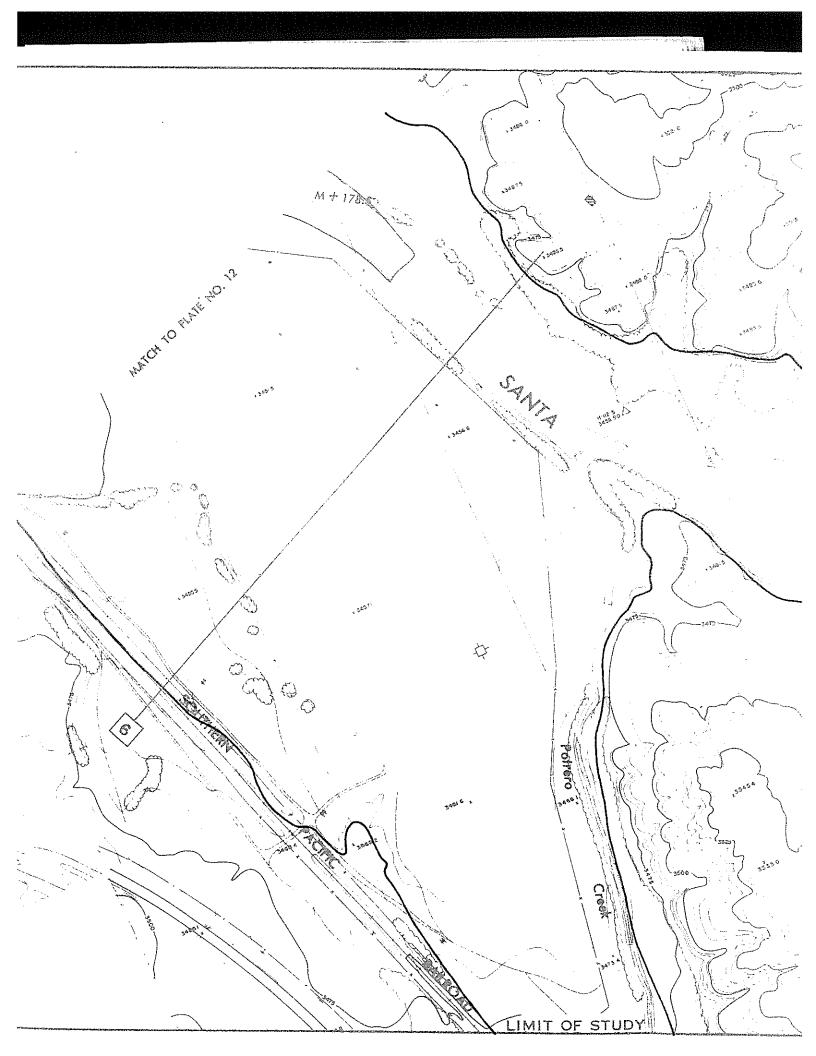


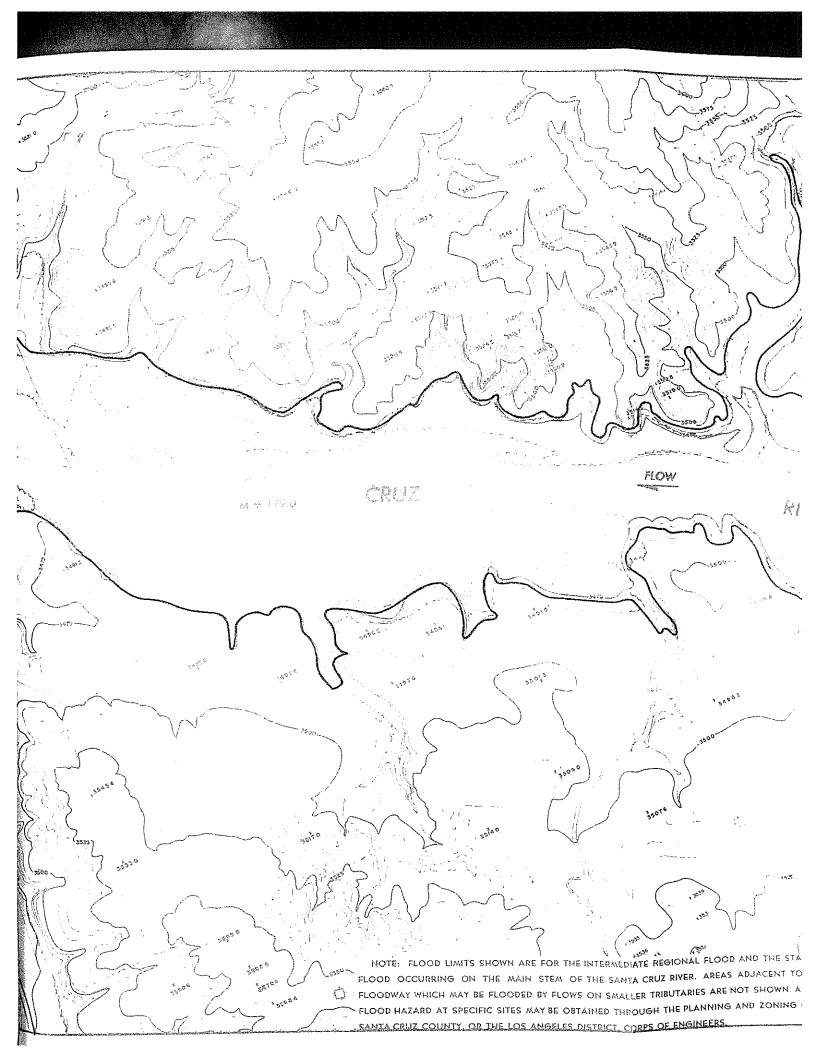


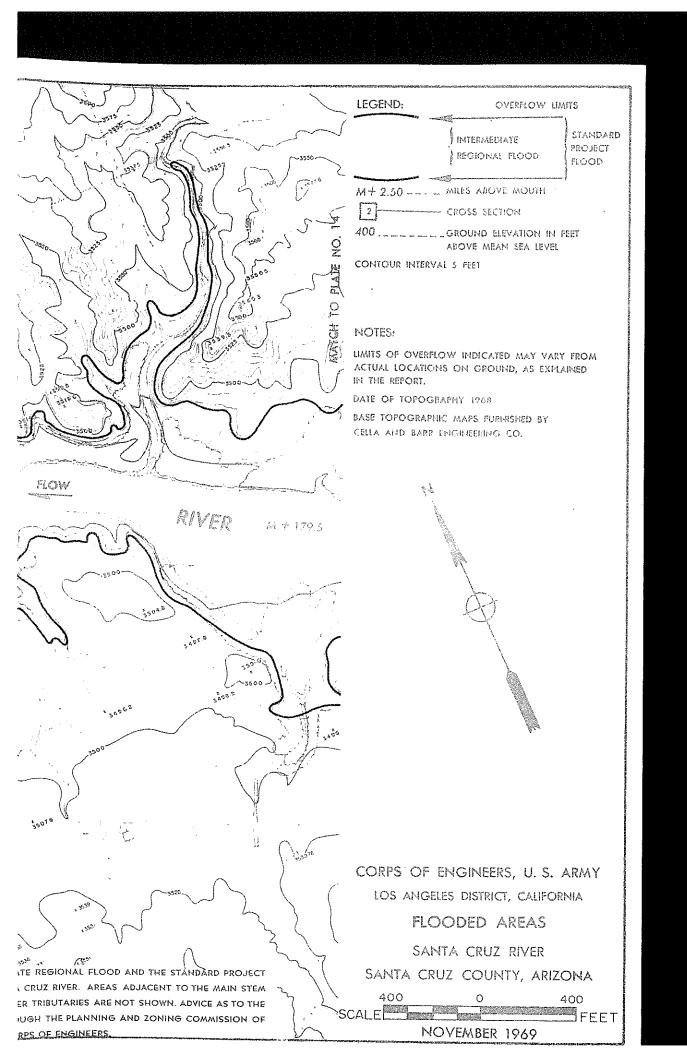




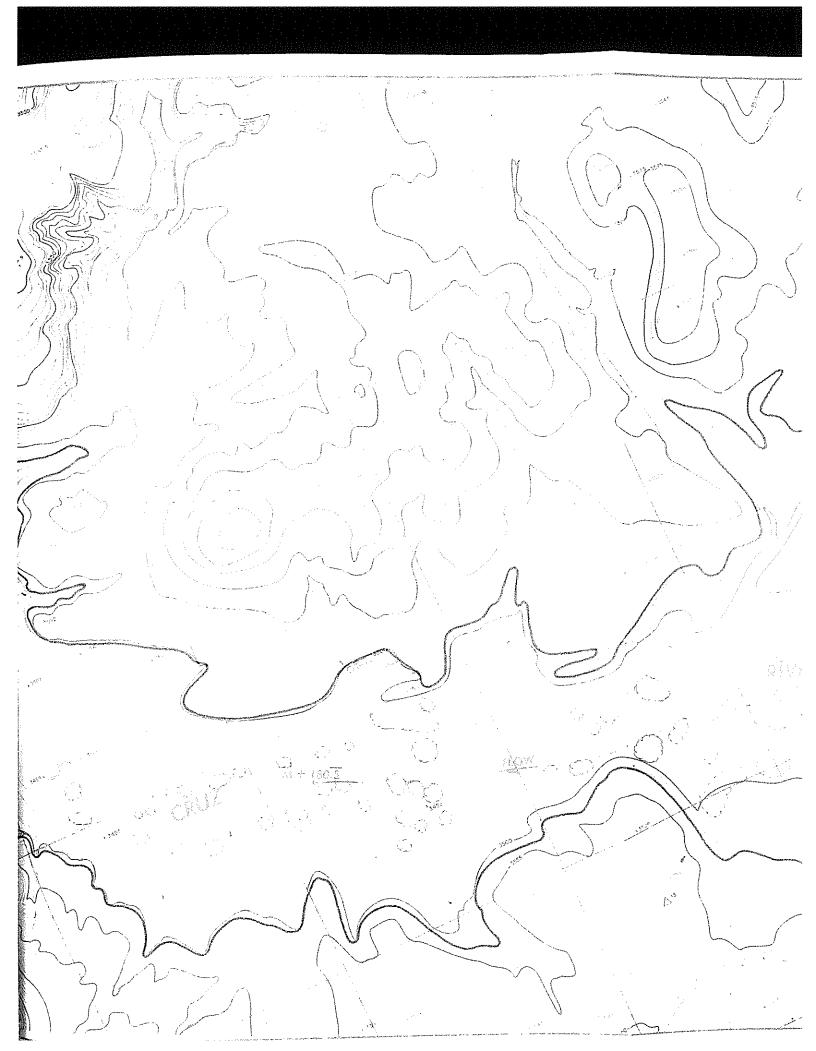


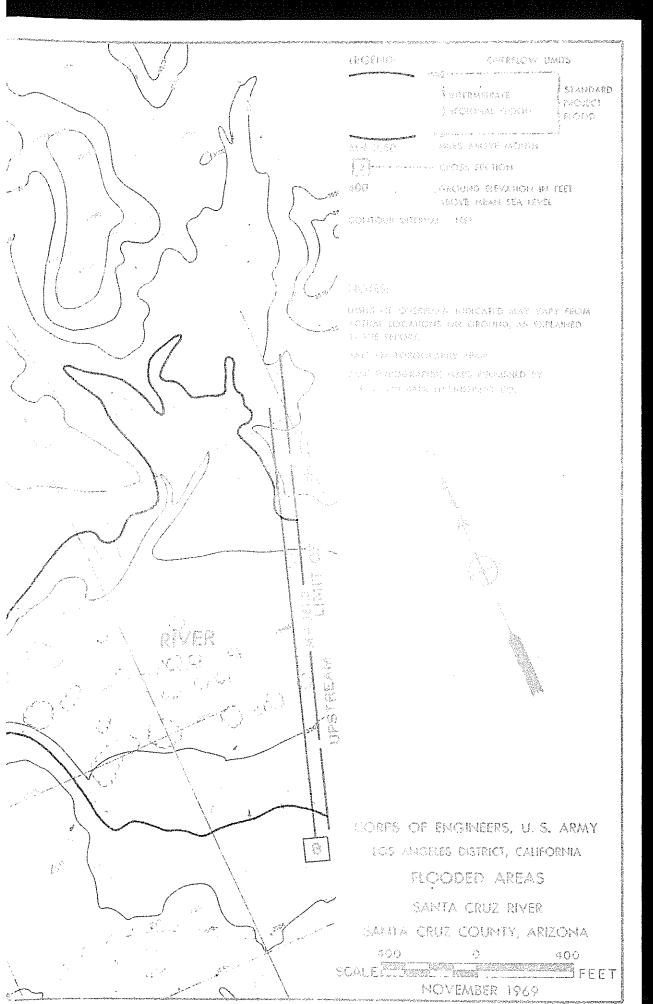


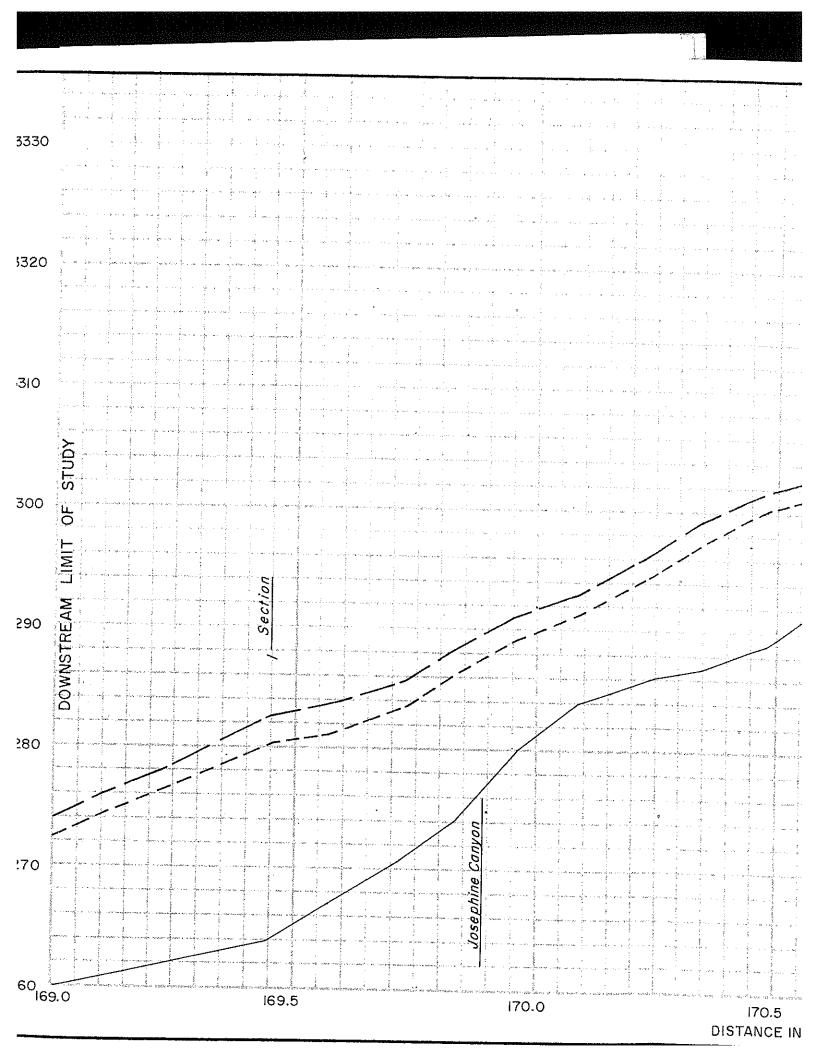


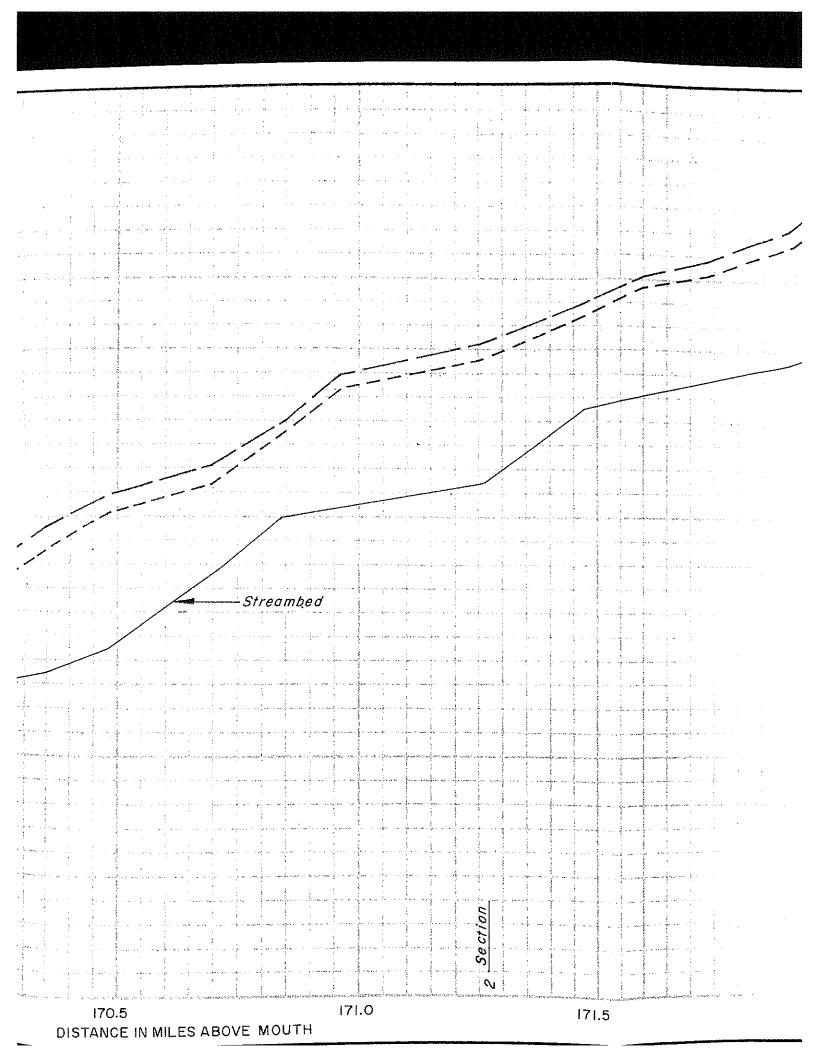








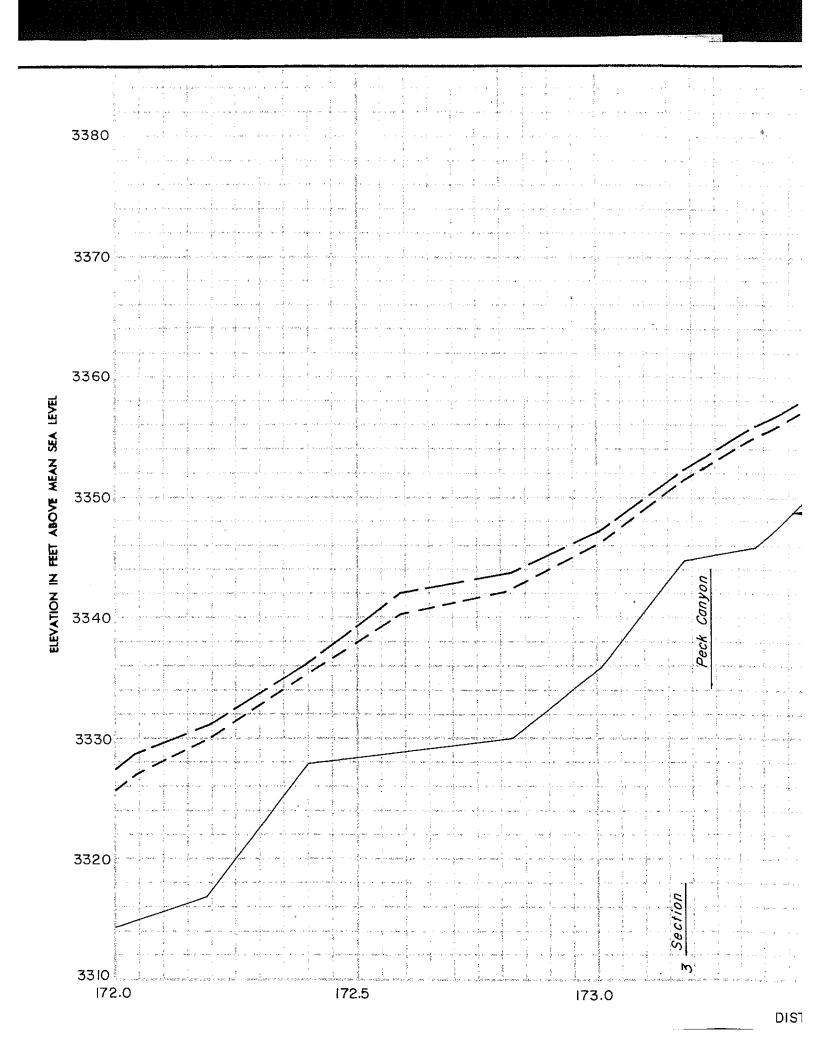


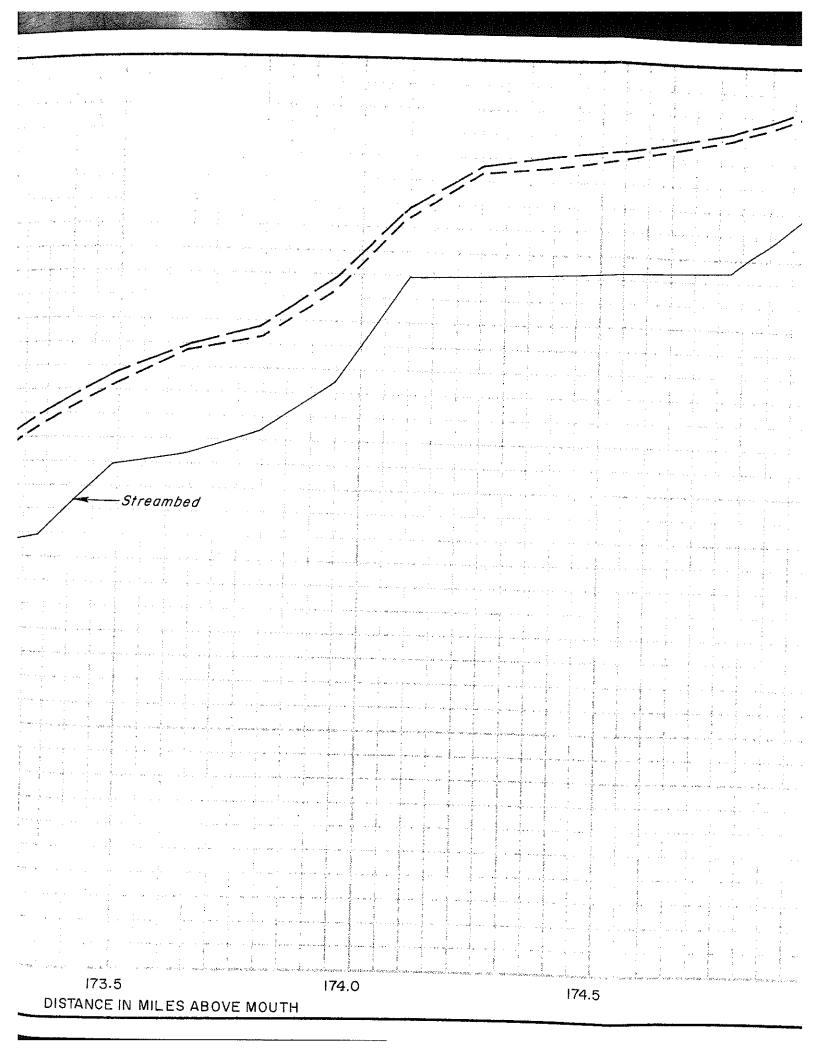


3330 LEGEND Standard Project Flood Intermediate Regional Flood 3320 3310 3290 3280 CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY 3270 LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA HIGH WATER PROFILES SANTA CRUZ RIVER SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, ARIZONA JE 3260 172.0

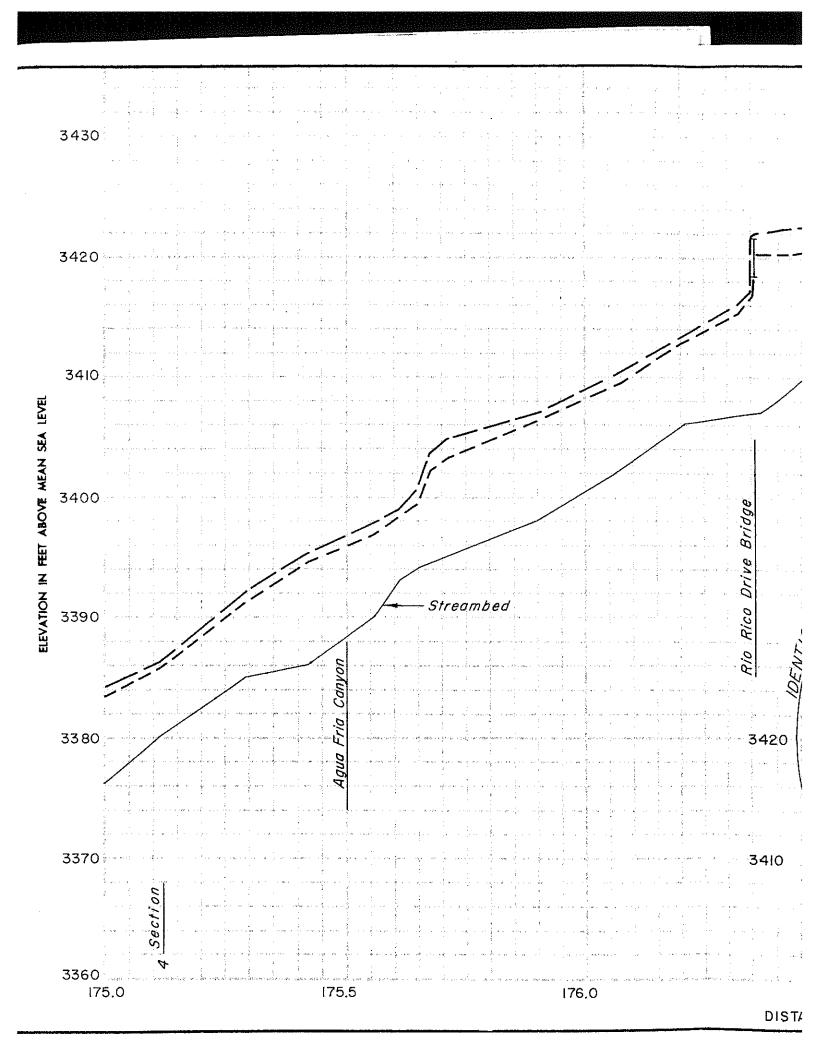
NOVEMBER 1969

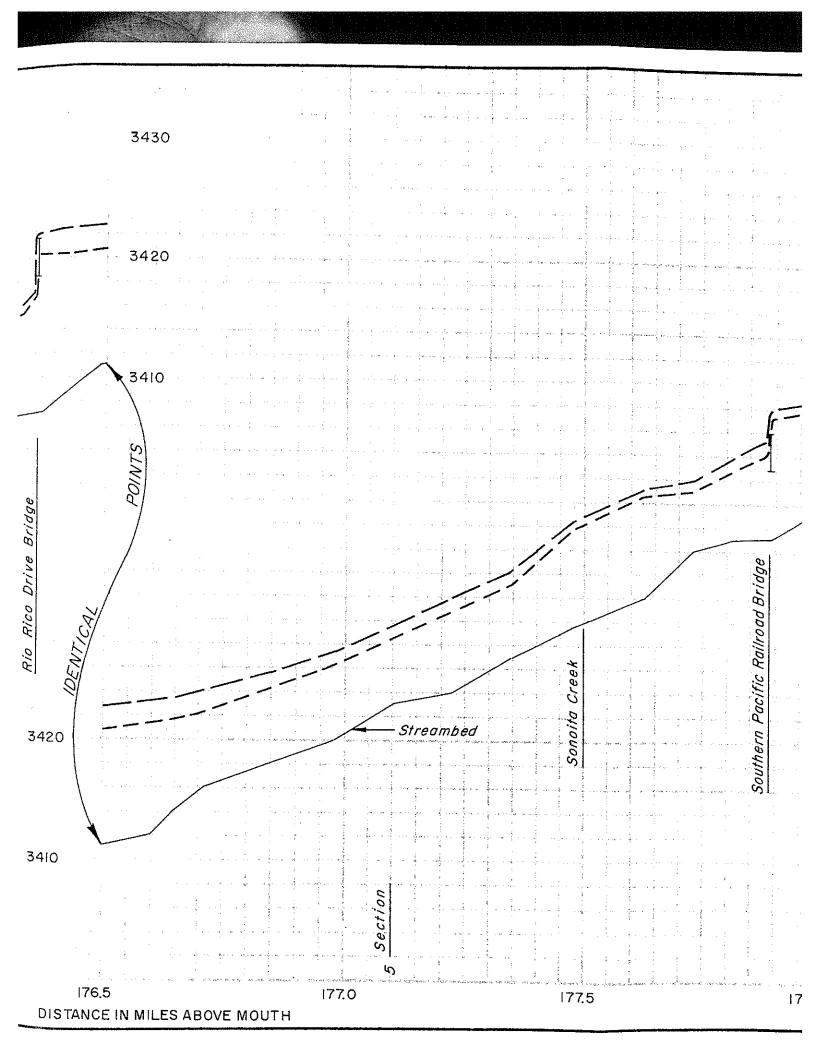
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LEGEND 3380 Standard Project Flood Intermediate Regional Flood NOTE: 3370 HIGH WATER PROFILES INDICATE THE WATER SURFACE ELEVATIONS OF THE INTERMEDIATE REGIONAL FLOOD AND THE STANDARD PROJECT FLOOD IN THE MAIN STEM OF THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER. IN SOME REACHES WHERE THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD ACTS AS A LEVEE, FLOWS EAST OF THE RAIL-3360 ROAD WOULD BE AT DIFFERENT STAGES THAN FLOWS IN THE MAIN STEM OF THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER, AS INDICATED BY THE CROSS SECTIONS. 3350 3340 CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY 3320 LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA HIGH WATER PROFILES SANTA CRUZ RIVER SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, ARIZONA 3310 175.0 NOVEMBER 1969





3470

LEGEND

Standard Project Flood

Intermediate Regional Flood ___.

NOTE:

3460

HIGH WATER PROFILES INDICATE THE WATER SURFACE ELEVATIONS OF THE INTERMEDIATE REGIONAL FLOOD AND THE STANDARD PROJECT FLOOD IN THE MAIN STEM OF THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER. IN SOME REACHES WHERE THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD ACTS AS A LEVEE, FLOWS EAST OF THE RAILROAD WOULD BE AT DIFFERENT STAGES THAN FLOWS IN THE MAIN STEM OF THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER, AS INDICATED BY THE CROSS SECTIONS.

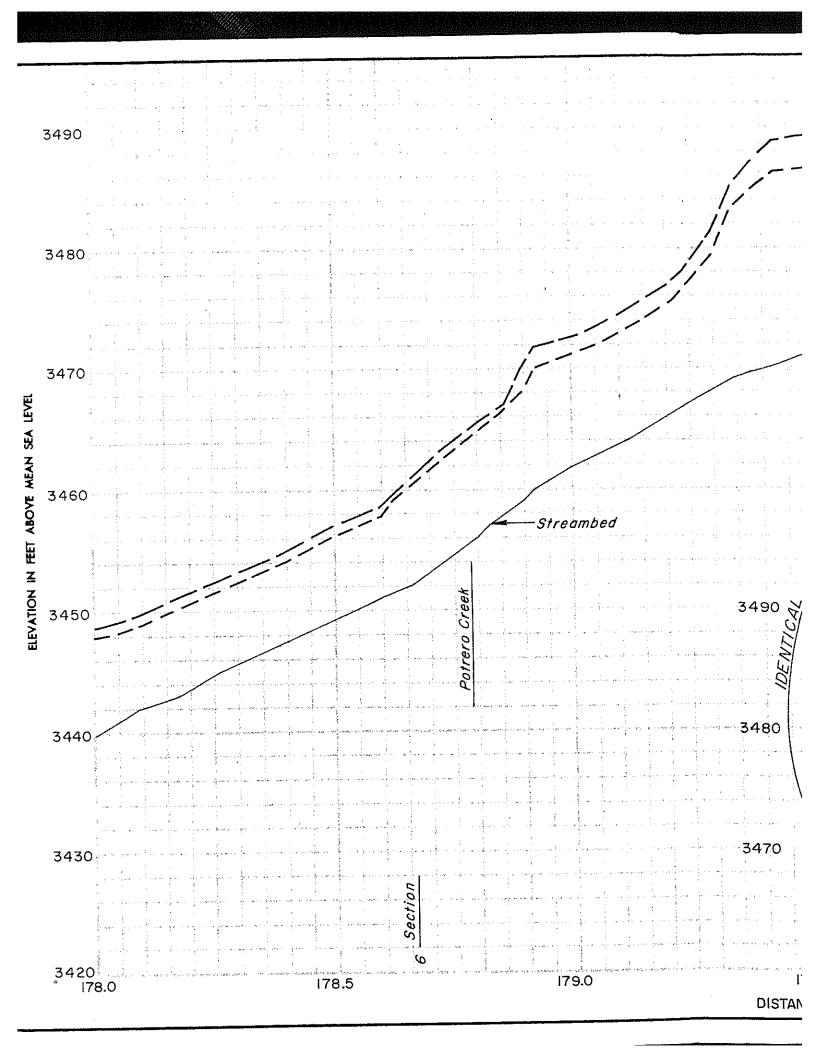
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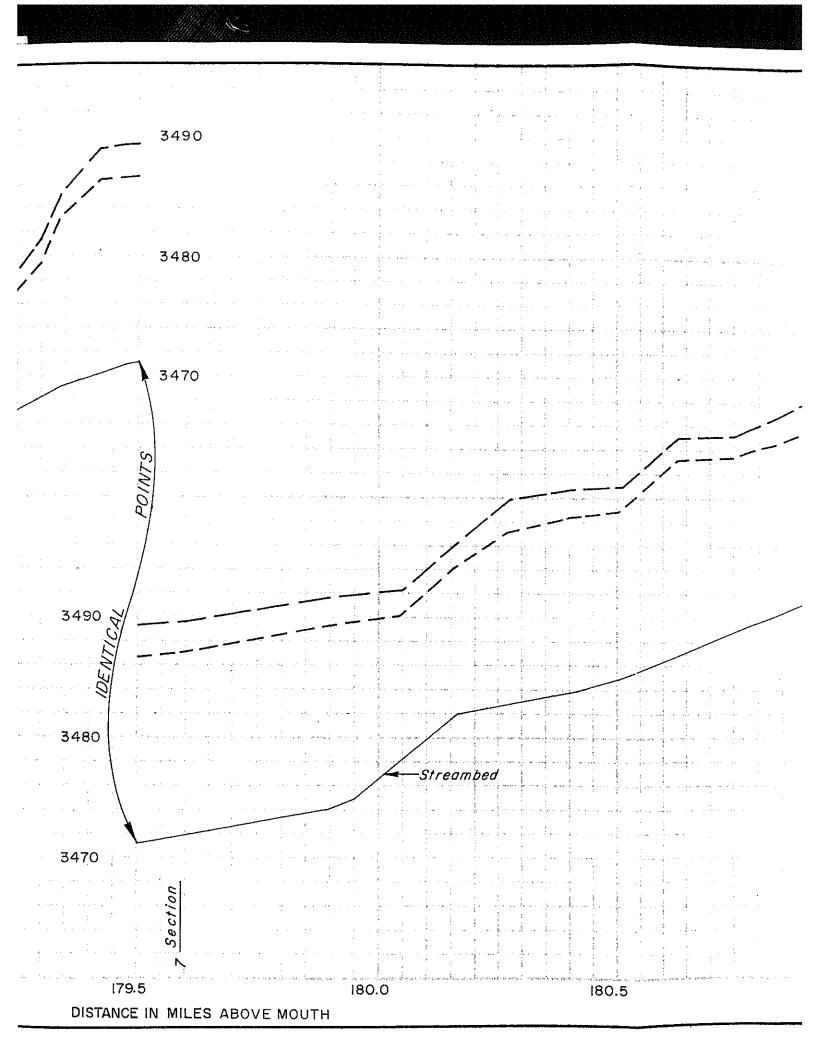
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CORPS OF ENGINEEPS, U. S. ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
HIGH WATER PROFILES
SANTA CRUZ RIVER
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, ARIZONA

178.0

NOVEMBER 1969

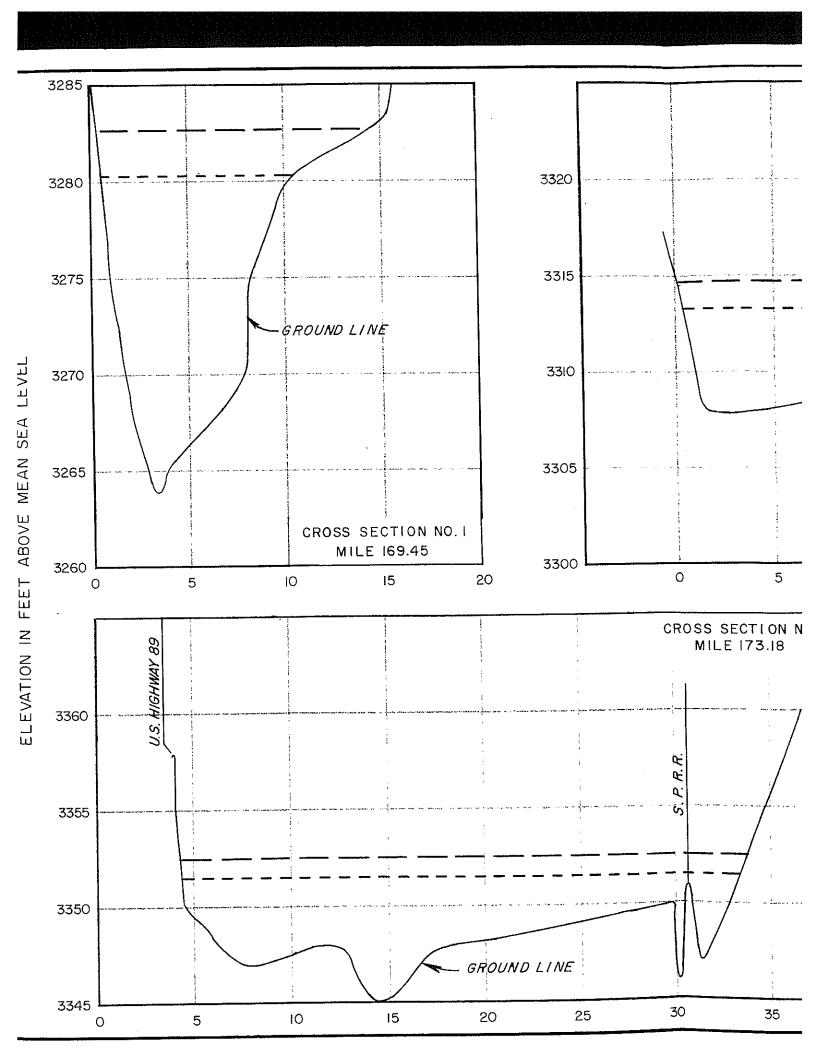


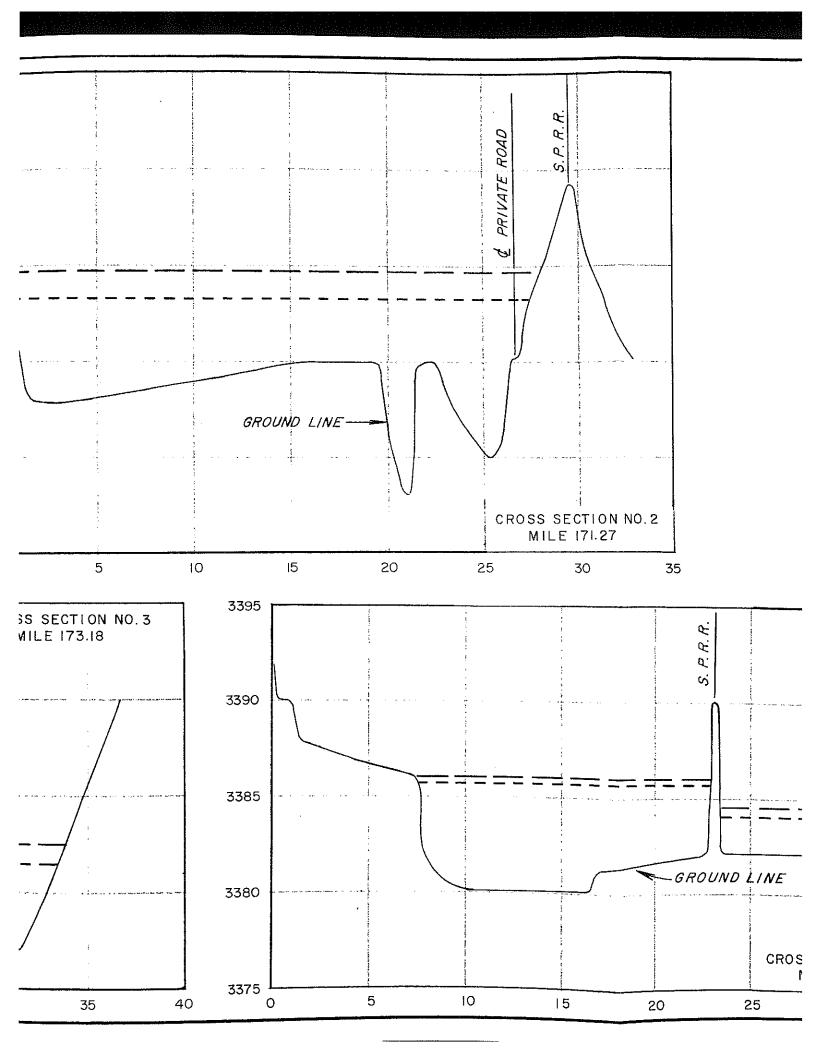


3530 3530 LEGEND Standard Project Flood Intermediate Regional Flood UPSTREAM LIMIT 0252 0759 3510 3500

101 A

CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
HIGH WATER PROFILES
SANTA CRUZ RIVER
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, ARIZONA





LEGEND Standard Project Flood. - Intermediate Regional Flood. NOTE: Horizontal distance in hundred feet. Sections taken looking downstream. NO. 2 35 Æ. Œ.

GROUND LINE

CROSS SECTION NO. 4

CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

CROSS SECTIONS

SANTA CRUZ RIVER
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, ARIZONA

